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ABSTRACT

This handbook is one of a series developed by the Texas Education Agency in response to requests to provide schools with additional information concerning the written composition portion of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). The handbook focuses on grades 1 through 3. Following an introduction, the handbook is in two parts. Part 1 contains general information on the writing process and how that process applies to the TAAS writing test. This section includes discussions of prewriting, elaboration, revision, and editing. Part 2 shows the scoring criteria and sample papers with detailed annotations for each type of writing eligible for testing at Grade 3: informative/descriptive, expressive/narrative, and informative/narrative ("how to"). Three appendixes present TAAS writing objectives and instructional targets for grade 3, an explanation of purpose/mode at grade 3, and eligible types of writing at grade 3. (SR)

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TAAS and the Writing Process: A Composition Handbook

Grades 1 through 3

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TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

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TAAS AND THE WRITING PROCESS:

A COMPOSITION HANDBOOK

GRADES 1 THROUGH 3

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TAAS AND THE WRITING PROCESS: A COMPOSITION HANDBOOK

GRADES 1 THROUGH 3

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INTRODUCTION

Background

During the 1989-1990 school year, the Texas Education Agency received numerous requests to provide schools with additional information concerning the written composition portion of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). A series of handbooks, entitled *TAAS and the Writing Process: A Composition Handbook*, has been developed in response to these requests. Designed to assist Texas educators in preparing students for the TAAS writing test at Grades 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 (exit level), the handbooks serve the following purposes:

- to show the connections between classroom writing and the TAAS writing test
- to provide information on the writing process and how this process can be applied by students when writing for TAAS
- to offer detailed information on the scoring of the TAAS written composition
- to provide sample papers, along with detailed annotations, for each type of writing eligible for assessment on the TAAS test

We hope that districts will find these handbooks to be valuable resources as they work to improve their students' performance on the TAAS writing test.

Questions and comments regarding these publications should be addressed to:

Division of Student Assessment
Texas Education Agency
1701 N. Congress Ave.
Austin, Texas 78701-1494
(512) 463-9536

Organization of This Handbook

Part 1 contains general information on the writing process and how that process applies to the TAAS writing test. This section includes discussions of prewriting, elaboration, revision, and editing. Part 2 shows the scoring criteria and sample papers with detailed annotations for each type of writing eligible for testing at Grade 3--informative/descriptive, expressive/narrative, and informative/narrative ("how to").

From TEAMS to TAAS: The Multiple-Choice Component

Both the format and the philosophy of the multiple-choice component of the writing test have changed significantly from TEAMS to TAAS. Whereas the TEAMS test evaluated students' language skills in isolation, the TAAS test

assesses these skills in a meaningful context. That is, the multiple-choice items for each objective are based on a series of written passages and require the student to read the passages in order to answer the items correctly. Assessing language skills in this format requires students to use the same kinds of skills that they use when editing or proofreading their own writing--skills such as locating and identifying errors in a piece of writing. The multiple-choice component of the TAAS writing test is thus more closely linked to the process of writing than was its predecessor.

From TEAMS to TAAS: The Written Composition

The criteria used to score TAAS compositions at Grades 5, 7, and 9 are similar to those used to score compositions on the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS). The exit level TEAMS test, however, did not require a composition. At Grade 3, adjustments have been made in the scoring criteria to account for the change in testing date from February to October. The October third grader is at an earlier developmental stage than the February third grader in terms of basic cognitive skills, such as the ability to organize ideas for a specific purpose. This difference was taken into consideration in the development of the scoring criteria used to evaluate TAAS Grade 3 written compositions.

Helping Students to Write: The Writing Process

Many effective teachers of writing focus on the writing process itself as well as on the end product of writing, teaching students how to go about a writing task from start to finish. Through modeling and frequent practice, students learn to generate ideas through prewriting, to develop those ideas into drafts, to rethink and clarify a piece of writing through revision, and to clean up surface errors through editing and proofreading. In these classrooms emphasis is placed on the content of the student's message. That is, the student's writing is viewed as an attempt to communicate ideas to the reader, who responds in some way to the message the student is trying to convey. Students have frequent opportunities to:

- write on topics that are meaningful to them
- write for a variety of purposes and in a variety of formats
- experiment with different ways of expressing ideas
- share their writing with others
- give and receive feedback

This emphasis on writing to communicate encourages students to take compositional risks--that is, to use language creatively without being hampered by concerns about mechanical correctness. The freedom to take chances allows students to explore different ways to express ideas and to develop confidence in their writing ability.

The Writing Process and TAAS

The student who is accustomed to writing and has written for many different purposes will more likely have acquired skills that can be applied to any writing task. Therefore, the best preparation for both the written composition and the multiple-choice portions of the TAAS test is to provide students with frequent opportunities to apply the writing process in the classroom. The student who is experienced in the process of writing will likely internalize this process and should then be able to apply it when writing the TAAS composition or when performing the editing/proofreading tasks required on the multiple-choice portion of the writing test. He or she will be able to generate ideas, to develop those ideas into a draft, to revise a draft, and to edit and proofread for surface errors, using skills and strategies acquired through classroom writing. It is particularly important that each student be familiar enough with the writing process to use it independently since the teacher cannot provide any assistance to the student during either portion of the writing test.

Focused Holistic Scoring

A process called focused holistic scoring is used to evaluate the TAAS written composition. This scoring procedure is "holistic" because the piece of writing is considered as a whole. It is "focused" in that the piece of writing is evaluated according to preestablished criteria. These criteria correspond to the first four objectives listed in the *TAAS English Language Arts Writing Objectives and Measurement Specifications*. They are:

Objective 1: The student will respond appropriately in a written composition to the purpose/audience specified in a given topic.

Objective 2: The student will organize ideas in a written composition on a given topic.

Objective 3: The student will demonstrate control of the English language in a written composition on a given topic.

Objective 4: The student will generate a written composition that develops/supports/elaborates the central idea stated in a given topic.

Each TAAS response is evaluated according to the extent to which it reflects mastery of these four objectives. The response is scored on a scale of 1 (low) to 4 (high). A student may also receive a rating of 0, indicating that the response could not be scored.

In order to master the TAAS writing test, a student must receive a rating of at least 2 on the composition, which indicates that the response is minimally successful, as well as answer correctly the required number of multiple-choice

items. In order to receive the Academic Recognition designation on the TAAS writing test, the student must receive a rating of 4 on the composition in addition to mastering all of the multiple-choice writing objectives.

Criteria Assessed on the TAAS Written Composition

Purpose/Audience

Individuals write for specific purposes and audiences. The way an individual writes depends on his or her purpose for writing and the audience addressed. At Grades 5, 7, 9, and 11 (exit level), the TAAS written composition assesses the student's ability to write for a specified purpose and audience. At Grade 3, however, the ability to write for a specified audience is NOT addressed, since this skill is not considered to be developmentally appropriate for the beginning third grade student. Two purposes--informative and expressive--are eligible for testing at Grade 3. Additional information on these purposes can be found in the *TAAS English Language Arts Writing Objectives and Measurement Specifications* and in the appendix of this document.

Organization

In order to communicate successfully, a writer must organize his or her ideas in a clear and logical manner. The TAAS written composition assesses the student's ability to use a specified mode, or method, of organization and to proceed logically within that mode. At Grade 3, two modes of organization--descriptive and narrative--are assessed. Additional information on these modes can be found in the *TAAS English Language Arts Writing Objectives and Measurement Specifications* and in the appendix of this document.

Language Control

In order to communicate effectively, the writer must show sufficient control of language so that the reader has no difficulty understanding what the writer is attempting to say. The TAAS written composition assesses the student's ability to use language in a clear and precise manner. Since TAAS responses represent first-draft writing, however, some errors in language mechanics, sentence structure, and usage are to be expected. The student is not penalized for these kinds of errors unless they are severe enough that meaning is impaired.

Elaboration

The successful writer is able to develop his or her ideas in such a way that the reader understands what the writer is attempting to communicate. The TAAS writing test assesses the student's ability to develop ideas clearly, logically, and thoroughly. For a more detailed explanation of elaboration, see pages 19-27.

Additional Information on the TAAS Writing Test

The *TAAS English Language Arts Writing Objectives and Measurement Specifications* provide detailed information concerning both the multiple-choice portion of the TAAS writing test and the written composition. With respect to the multiple-choice items, the measurement specifications describe the objectives, or core concepts, and instructional targets, or specific skills reflecting the essential elements, eligible for assessment, as well as the types of items that may appear on the test. In addition, they provide sample items for each instructional target and an appendix listing the usage, capitalization, and punctuation rules eligible for testing.

With regard to the written composition, the measurement specifications describe the purposes and modes eligible for testing; the types of writing prompts, or topics, used; and the characteristics of successful responses. In addition, they present a sample prompt for each eligible type of writing.

Part 1
TAAS and the Writing Process

GENERATING AND ORGANIZING IDEAS: THE PREWRITING STAGE

What is Prewriting?

Prewriting is the process that an effective writer follows to assemble ideas and develop communication strategies before he or she begins to write. It involves defining the task and devising ways to accomplish that task. This planning stage is especially important because it determines the writer's work in subsequent stages of the writing process. Prewriting moves the writer from the thinking stage to the writing stage and includes any activity that helps to generate, focus, and/or organize creative thought.

Helping Students to Prewrite

Beginning writers are often unaware of the many stages that a piece of writing may go through before completion because they have only seen final finished products. Consequently, they may be prone to begin a writing assignment by preparing a "final" draft rather than by engaging in any preliminary activities. When their one-draft compositions are less than successful, they may become frustrated and convinced that they cannot write. It is helpful for beginning writers to understand that writing involves more than a perfect recording of words, and that many successful writers do follow a step-by-step writing process. The first of these steps is prewriting, and there are a number of prewriting activities that may be particularly useful to young writers.

Prewriting Strategies

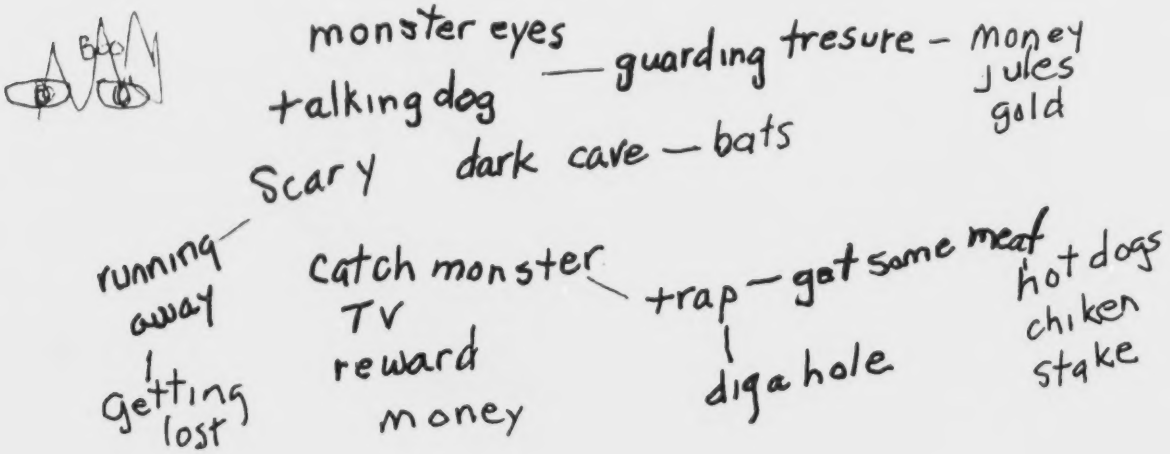
Prewriting is often regarded only as a technique for generating and focusing ideas; however, it is also useful in organizing the writer's ideas. It may include activities such as brainstorming, focused freewriting, webbing, charting, listing, drawing, and story mapping. The writer may use any of these, singly or in combination, to develop a full and detailed body of ideas that provides a solid base for a first draft.

Brainstorming

When students are first learning to use prewriting strategies, they often benefit from preliminary discussions, or oral brainstorming sessions, that relate writing topics to their own experiences. To begin the brainstorming session, the teacher gives the students a word, a phrase, a question, or a situation intended to stimulate thinking. For example, if the planned writing activity is a personal narrative, the prompt might be "Firsts," "First Trips," or "First Day at School." During this prewriting session there are no "right" or "wrong" responses. Rather the purpose of the activity is to generate and record ideas that will stimulate writing, and virtually any response has that

potential. After gaining experience in several large group sessions, students should be able to begin working through their prewriting in small groups. When students become familiar with this prewriting strategy, it will be time for them to progress to individual written brainstorming. This is an important transition for students to make, since no group, oral, or teacher-directed prewriting is possible when the TAAS test is administered.

In the following example the student used brainstorming to generate ideas for his or her narrative, based on the prompt on page 86 of this handbook.



Focused Freewriting

Focused freewriting is similar to brainstorming in that the goal is simply to generate and record as many ideas, feelings, memories, and even seemingly unrelated words and phrases as possible. Students are directed to write steadily for a certain period of time (five or ten minutes, for example) in response to a particular stimulus. The only rule is that the students must not stop writing. If they run out of ideas, they can write over and over "I'm stuck" or "I don't know what to write" until another thought comes to mind. In this exercise there should be no editing: no erasures, no crossouts, no reflecting, no correcting. The purpose of focused freewriting is to find and capture images, thoughts, feelings, or words and to get them on paper. This activity is a good way to combat the non-productive time students spend worrying about getting started or about what to write. Focused freewriting helps them to learn to separate the producing process from the editing process.

The key factor in both brainstorming and focused freewriting is the absence of editing. During this period nothing is a "good" idea, nor is anything a "bad" idea. Later, during the drafting stage, the "best" ideas will be used, but at the time of generation no writer knows exactly what the final draft will include or which idea is "best." In the following example, based on the prompt on page 86

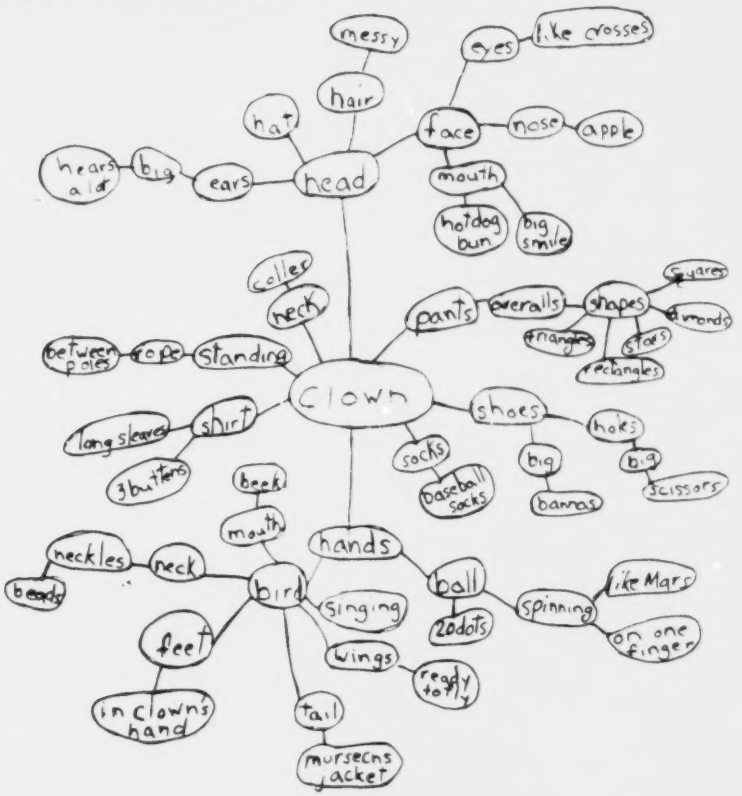
of this handbook, the student used focused freewriting to work his or her way through the outline of a story.

I see eyses ina cave, What To do?
GO HOME! No you have to write a
story. do something else. throw stuff
yell. go look. OK go look. What is
it? Its a monster. its a man. monkey
I don't know. what lives in cave?
Bats vampire bats tigers lines
beors ok. its a bear ok now
what? Go Home NO Thats to short.

You run he chases. then what?
he catches me we fight. NoWAY!
he chases I hide. where
where where where in a
tree in a cave. yuk to
dark. May be behind a
rock ok thats good
now whathe goes away
and now you go home.
uh oh your lost. what
to do? ha I find a map
and go home ok
I'm ready for the story

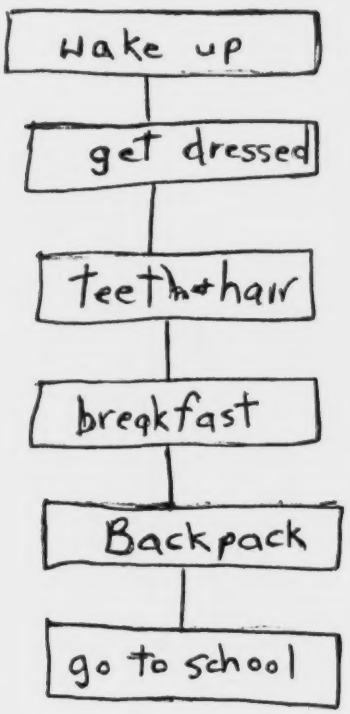
Webbing

Some students demonstrate difficulty in narrowing a topic or focusing on a manageable portion of a larger subject. Prewriting activities can help. One prewriting activity that may help students focus on a particular topic or portion of a piece of writing is webbing. In the webbing process students begin by writing a word or phrase in a circle drawn in the center of the paper. As with brainstorming and focused freewriting, students begin to write down all of the responses evoked by the stimulus in that first circle. Each word or phrase is placed in its own circle, which is connected to a preceding circle. Because each of the words or ideas is connected to another and therefore linked to the original word, the resulting collection of ideas is somewhat more interrelated than brainstorming or focused freewriting. This technique is effective in preparing a descriptive response based on a picture prompt or in expanding ideas in a narrative or informative piece. In a descriptive piece, for example, webbing can help direct the students' attention to the details of a picture or an object to be described. The webbing, or connecting lines, helps the student organize his or her thoughts by depicting objects or ideas in relation to one another and to the whole. By using the web as a guide, students will be more likely to describe one area completely before moving to another, thereby demonstrating an organizational strategy. In addition, webbing promotes the elaboration required for successful responses by providing a graphic display of related details that can be incorporated in an elaborated description. The following web was developed for the description of the clown shown on page 50 of this handbook.



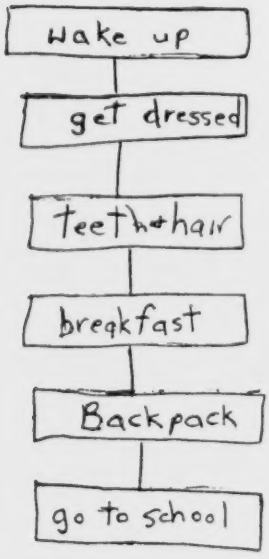
Charting

Informative/narrative writing requires students to tell how to do something. Consequently, a detailed sequence of steps is necessary for success. A flowchart is useful in any writing that requires sequencing. In the flowchart below, based on the prompt on page 122, each entry is connected to the next entry, and the ideas or events progress in a linear manner.



Listing

Although a flowchart is helpful in organizing thoughts for a first draft, many students have a tendency to list only the major steps in their writing and to ignore the necessary elaborated detail. It may be helpful for these students to use another type of prewriting in conjunction with the flowchart in order to elicit those important details necessary for elaboration. This writer used some of the flowchart entries as headings for lists.



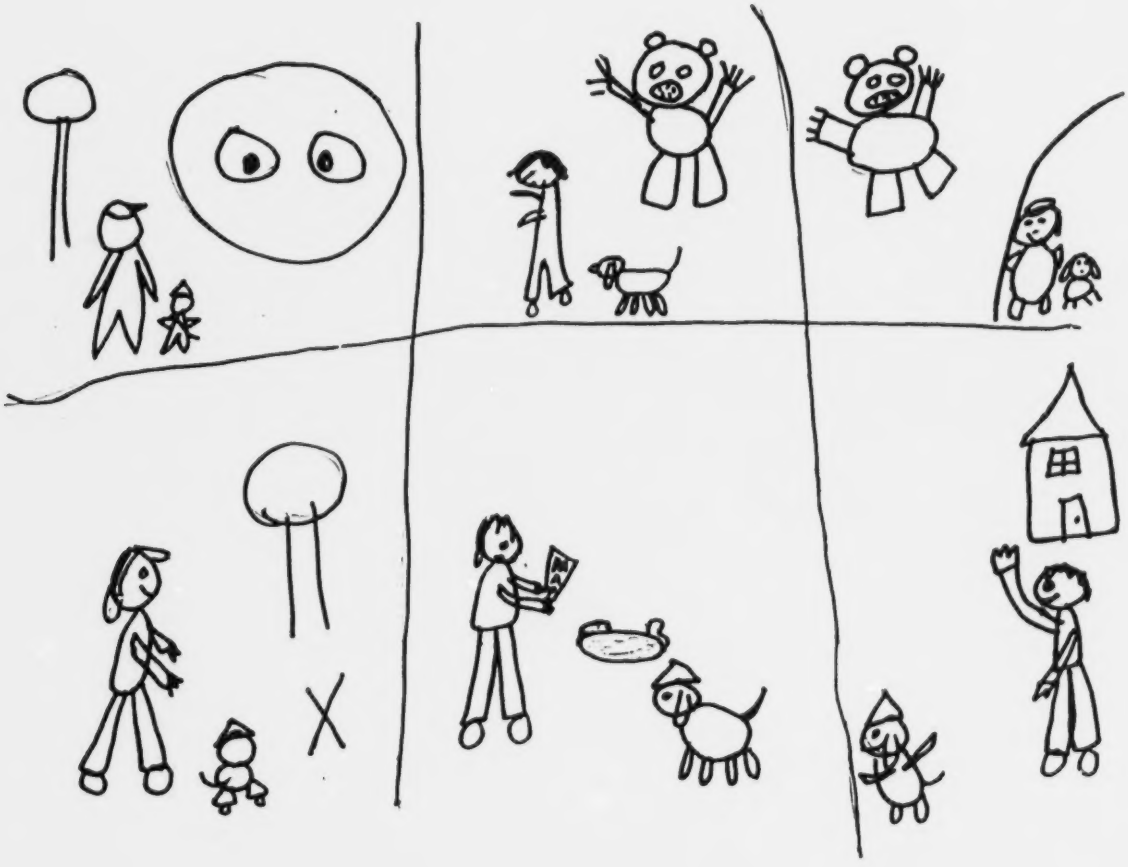
get dressed
- shirt
- shoes
- socks
- jeans
- belt

breakfast
- cereal
- milk
- orange juice

Backpack
- books
- homework
- lunch
  - sandwich
  - apple
  - cookies

Drawing

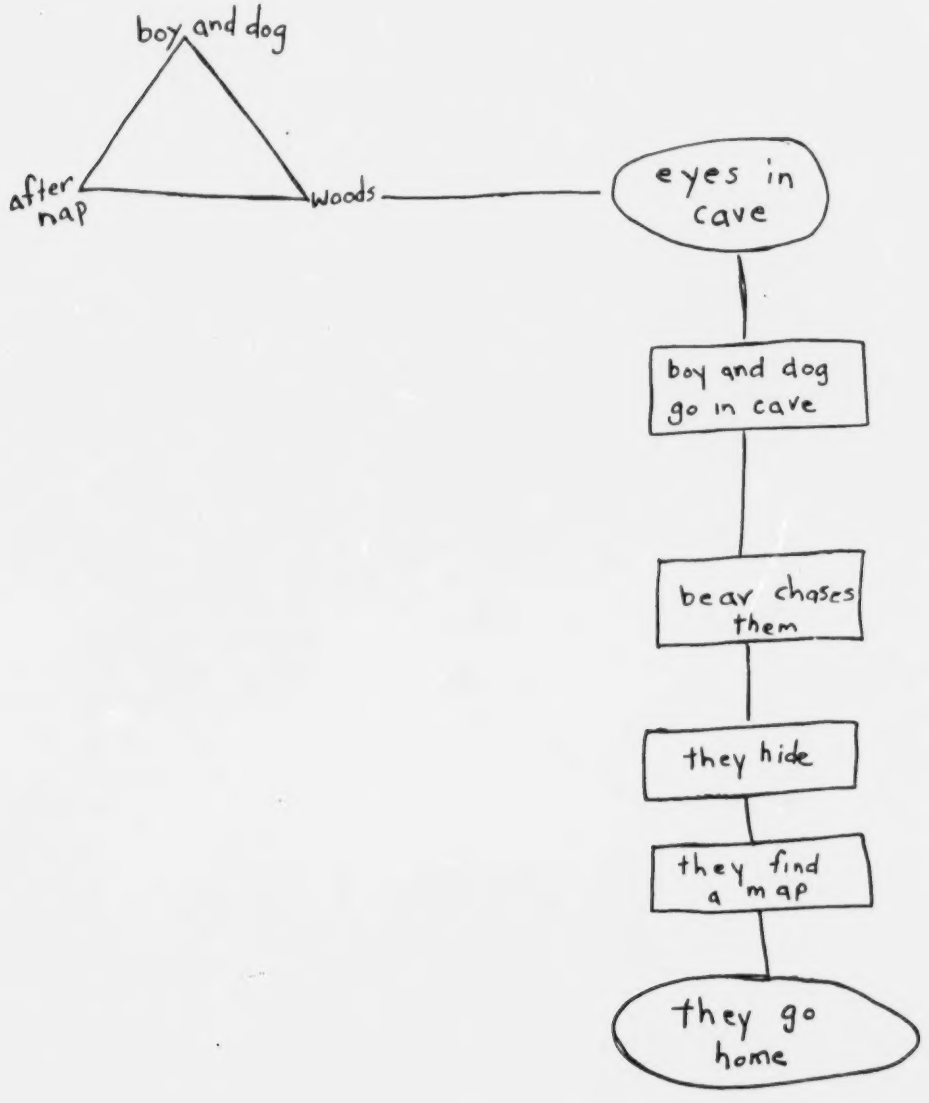
Many students enjoy drawing, and this preference can easily be channeled into a narrative prewriting activity. The student can develop a story line in a comic-strip-like motif and then translate the story into words, using the prewriting pictures as an organizational guide. The following drawing was a prewriting activity for a narrative composition based on the prompt on page 86 of this handbook.



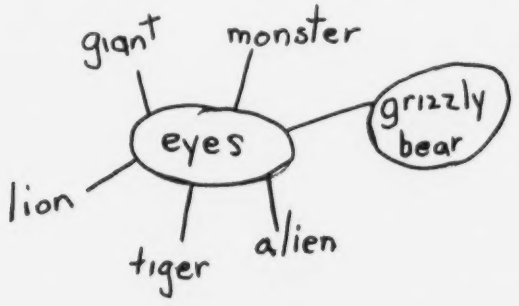
Very young students who are beginning readers and writers also enjoy drawing as part of student-dictated-experience writing. The teacher often draws a scene that serves as a stimulus for the students to continue drawing a picture story. When the pictures have been completed, the students dictate their stories based on that picture series.

Story Mapping

Story mapping is another useful organizational activity for narrative writing. In the example below, the points of the triangle represent the characters and setting--that is, who, when, and where. The first circle specifies the conflict, and the last circle contains the resolution. Blocks are added between the circles to represent specific story events.



Some students may want to combine story mapping with another prewriting activity to help generate specific details for their stories or descriptions. In the activity below the writer uses events from his or her story map as the focal point for generating additional ideas through webbing. The writer then circles the ideas that he or she chose to use in the story.



Prewriting for TAAS

As with any other writing assignment, prewriting will most likely improve the overall quality of the TAAS composition. Students are provided with two blank pages in the test booklet on which to generate, focus, and organize their thoughts in preparation for responding to the writing prompt. They may choose to use a prewriting activity or any combination of activities, or they may write out their ideas in a draft form on those pages. Students should be encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. Although the TAAS compositions are scored as first drafts, the content is expected to be developed, organized, and written for the correct purpose, and prewriting is a useful tool for accomplishing these tasks.

If prewriting is part of the routine classroom writing experience, students will always have a strategy to use when faced with a new writing challenge. Although the name "prewriting" suggests that it is a preliminary activity conducted only before writing begins, it is, in reality, recursive, as is the entire writing process. That is, it is quite possible that a writer would use a prewriting technique to help resolve a problem that has been revealed during the revision process. For example, if an idea needs additional elaboration, the student might use that idea as the stimulus and brainstorm to generate related details. On the other hand, if an idea lacks focus, it might be used as the center for a webbing activity so that the student can develop the relationship between that idea and others to be included in the piece. Consequently, students should be encouraged to regard the various types of prewriting techniques as tools that can be used throughout the construction of their pieces of writing.

There is no one prewriting activity that always works for every type of writing, nor is there one activity that works for every individual engaged in a particular kind of writing. However, students experienced in the prewriting process will be able to make full use of their own prewriting strategies in writing for TAAS, and their compositions will more likely reflect the degree of specificity, elaboration, organization, and language control required for success.

ELABORATING IDEAS: THE DRAFTING STAGE

What is Elaboration?

Elaboration may be defined as the degree to which the writer clearly, logically, and completely develops ideas in order to allow the reader to understand thoroughly what the writer is attempting to say in a piece of writing. This understanding is dependent not so much on the quantity of the development as on its quality. The merit of any piece of writing cannot be judged solely by the number of words it contains, although many writers--especially inexperienced ones--may erroneously believe that the more they write, the more effective their piece of writing will likely be. There is a relationship between the length of a piece of writing and its overall effectiveness; however, this relationship is not absolute. For example, two pages of vague generalities in support of an idea are less effective than one page of relevant, specific support. Writers need to learn that the effectiveness of a piece of writing, no matter what the writer's purpose, is determined not only by the number of ideas generated, but also by the precision and thoroughness of the development of each idea once it has been generated. It is a writer's ability to develop each idea that determines how strong and complete the elaboration in a piece of writing will likely be.

Helping Students to Elaborate in Their Writing

While the components of form--correct language mechanics and sound organization--help to make a student's writing clear and coherent, an overemphasis on their importance may create misconceptions about what effective writing is. One widely held misconception, for example, is that mechanical correctness is the single criterion for effective writing. Another is that knowing certain "formulas" will always help one to write effectively. Two of the most common writing "formulas" involve beginning and ending the composition in a particular way (using, in many cases, a teacher-generated sentence), and writing the composition in a certain number of paragraphs (often specified by the teacher beforehand) without regard for the simplicity or complexity of the writing assignment or topic. The excessive use of writing "formulas" may promote the idea that effective writing can be more easily accomplished--and meaning more easily created--if the writer follows certain predetermined steps. In reality, effective writing requires careful thought. It is dependent on the writer's understanding of his or her purpose, as well as on his or her ability to organize ideas logically, to maintain a consistent control of written language, and to generate and develop ideas in a way that will make the text richer and more accessible, allowing the reader to appreciate and understand completely what the writer is attempting to say.

In every piece of writing, no matter what its purpose, the writer must generate, organize, and develop ideas. Although all of these activities require the writer to create meaning, it is in the writer's development, or elaboration,

of ideas that this meaning is centered. In order to develop ideas in their own writing, students must first learn what effective elaboration is. Only after students have this basic understanding can they take the next step: applying these principles to their own writing so that each generated idea is relevant, specific, and thoroughly developed.

Developing in Students a Critical Frame of Mind

One of the primary purposes of the prewriting stage of the writing process is to generate and record as many ideas as possible, without consideration for whether they will ultimately be "usable." At that stage, the writer must not be concerned with the quality of the ideas; that is, how relevant/irrelevant or effective/ineffective they are. However, once the writer is ready to choose those ideas he or she wishes to include in the first draft, adopting a critical frame of mind becomes necessary, for it enables the writer to make sound judgments about both the quality of the ideas and the most effective means of developing them.

The writer who adopts a critical frame of mind will be able to

(1) focus on what is "good" about the development of each idea so that he or she can shape each one into something that creates meaning and

(2) discard what is irrelevant and ineffective, thereby strengthening the logic and pertinence of the ideas retained.

Below are three excerpts from Grade 3 TAAS responses. The first excerpt is based on the descriptive prompt on page 50 of this handbook, the second on the narrative prompt on page 86, and the third on the "how-to" prompt on page 122. Following each excerpt is a short explanation of how the writer may improve the quality of the elaboration by distinguishing those sentences that contribute effectively to meaning from those sentences that do not.

EXCERPT 1 (DESCRIPTION):

> The ball is in the clowns hand. It has allot of dots on it. When it is on the clowns finger it is spening I think the clown likes the ball. It makes a little sound when it spens.

In the excerpt above, the writer needs to eliminate the sentence "I think the clown likes the ball." This sentence is nondescriptive and therefore does not contribute to the writer's purpose, which is to paint a vivid picture in the mind of the reader. In addition, because the sentence is about the clown rather than about the ball, the writer momentarily loses his or her focus, which creates a minor organizational lapse. Discarding this sentence and adding in its place

another descriptive piece of information about the ball (e.g., "The ball is spening like the planet Mars") would strengthen the description, both in terms of the development and the organization of ideas.

EXCERPT 2A (NARRATIVE):

> . . . look in that cave said Robin then they went inside to see what it was and it said follow me so they went be carfull He said Help! boom! they fell in to a big whole and in the whole was other people in there . . .

In the excerpt above, taken from the response on page 92, the writer needs to "fill in" the gaps that make the narrative difficult to follow. To accomplish this task, the writer must first establish who the characters are before using such indefinite pronouns as "it" to refer to them. This would allow the reader to form a clear picture of each character and what role he, she, or it plays in the story. The writer must also explain each event in more detail so that the reader is able to understand the significance of that event, as well as its logical connection to the next event in the sequence. Below is an example of how a student might revise this section of the story to improve the quality of the elaboration. (The underlined sections represent changes or additions.)

EXCERPT 2B (NARRATIVE):

> . . . lets look in that cave said Robin. Then Robin and Robin Hood went inside to see what the eyes were. It was a monster who lived in the cave and it said follow me so Robin and Robin Hood followed the monster. They got to a dark place in the cave. Be carfull Robin said. Help! boom! Robin and Robin Hood fell in to a big whole and in the bottom of the whole was other people. The people said the monster had captured them. They were scared and so was Robin and Robin Hood . . .

EXCERPT 3A ("HOW TO"):

> Then I brush my teeth. After that I get my shoes and socks on. Then I eat my cereall. Last of all my mom drivs me to school. I like school. We do fun things in class. My favrite subgect is math. I sit by Maria and Jeff. Some times we writ storys.

In the previous example, the writer needs to eliminate completely the last five sentences, beginning with the sentence "I like school." These sentences fill up space on the page but have no other discernible purpose: none qualify as elaboration of this topic because none further the reader's understanding of how the writer gets ready for school in the morning. These sentences, therefore, are both irrelevant and unfocused, weakening the response rather than strengthening it.

To achieve more effective elaboration in this response, the writer may refocus his or her efforts on the first part of the response, developing the ideas contained in it with precise and pertinent details. Below is an example of how a student might effectively develop the second sentence of the response through specific, relevant elaboration. (The underlined sections have been added.)

EXAMPLE 3B ("HOW TO"):

> After that I <u>am ready to</u> get my shoes and socks on. <u>First I take my gym shoes out of my closet. They are white with blue dezines on them. Then I take my favrite socks out of my dresser dror. I like my pink ones the best. I sit on my bed and put my socks on first. After that I put my gym shoes on. I tie my shoe lasses nice and tight.</u>

In all three of these excerpts, the writer's ability to refocus and revise has strengthened the clarity, logic, and development of ideas, thereby improving the overall quality of the elaboration in that part of the response.

Elaborating for TAAS

Elaboration is an important component of successful writing on the TAAS test, for the effectiveness of the student's response is, in large measure, determined by the quality of the development of ideas--that is, how clearly and thoroughly the student develops those ideas that are relevant to the specified purpose.

On the TAAS test, however, many students encounter their greatest difficulties in the area of elaboration. They may receive an unsuccessful rating of 1 on the assessment simply because they failed to support their ideas with enough details. Because the responses contain merely one or more unelaborated ideas or too few minimally elaborated ideas, they lack the information or explanation necessary to be minimally successful. This type of response is considered skeletal because there are simply too many places in the text where the student needed to "tell more." In fact, it is often what the student has failed to say rather than what he or she has said that has caused the response to receive a 1.

There is no single method through which support or elaboration may be achieved on TAAS; depending upon the purpose for writing, the writer may use a number of different methods to develop ideas effectively. Whatever the writer's purpose, however, including information that does not add either explicitly or implicitly to the reader's understanding of the response is contrary to the whole notion of meaningful elaboration.

The quality of the support and/or elaboration in TAAS responses is assessed in terms of how completely each idea is developed. Teachers can improve students' ability to develop ideas by teaching them what elaboration is and how it is achieved in a written response. Students need to understand that there are levels of elaboration that range from minimal to thorough; once students can recognize the distinctions among these levels--that is, whether an idea is extended, somewhat elaborated, or moderately elaborated--they can learn to develop their ideas more effectively.

Below are general definitions of the levels of elaboration as they apply to TAAS responses. Following these definitions are more specific explanations of elaboration in descriptive, narrative, and "how-to" writing.

Extension

An idea is extended when it is minimally elaborated; that is, when the writer links to it an additional specific piece of pertinent information.

A Somewhat Elaborated Idea

If the writer links to the extension of an idea one or two more specific pieces of pertinent information that add to the reader's understanding of the idea, that idea is considered somewhat elaborated.

A Moderately Elaborated Idea

If the writer further clarifies a somewhat elaborated idea by describing or explaining it in even greater detail, the idea becomes moderately elaborated.

When the writer adds specific pieces of pertinent information to each idea, he or she creates more effective elaboration. This effectiveness is the result of the "layering" of pieces of information. "Layering" may be defined as the way in which the pieces of information that are pertinent to each generated idea are strung together so as to support the idea logically and specifically. The more each idea is layered, the greater, or deeper, the reader's understanding of the idea--and the response as a whole--will likely be.

Elaboration in Descriptive Writing

In the case of a picture prompt, elaboration in descriptive writing is achieved through a combination of specific language and the location of objects/features, one in relation to another.

Examples of the levels of elaboration, based upon the prompt on page 50, are listed below:

UNELABORATED IDEA

The clown has a bird.

In this idea the bird is neither specifically described nor located. The quality of the idea may be improved in two ways: by describing the bird more specifically (e.g., "The clown has a dove"), and by locating the bird in the picture so that the reader understands precisely where it is in relation to the clown (e.g., "In one of the clown's hands there is a bird").

EXTENDED IDEA

The clown has a bird. The bird has a necklase.

The extension adds a piece of information--"a necklase"--to the original idea, although the necklace is neither specifically described nor precisely located.

SOMEWHAT ELABORATED IDEA

The clown has a bird. The bird has a perl necklase around her neck.

In some instances the somewhat elaborated idea will contain more sentences than the extended idea. In this instance, however, both are two sentences. The difference between them is a matter of specific language and location; that is, the type of necklace is identified ("perl"), and the necklace is precisely located on the bird ("around her neck").

MODERATELY ELABORATED IDEA

> The clown has a bird. The bird has a perl necklase around her neck. She has her wings out. They are made of little zig-zags on the bottum.

The addition of the last two sentences provides the reader with more specific information about the appearance of the bird. The last sentence also identifies the exact location of the "little zig-zags" on the bird's wings.

Elaboration in Narrative Writing

In narrative writing, elaboration may be achieved through such methods as description, characterization, word choice, and dialogue. The inclusion of description, for example, may help the reader to visualize the characters and the events of the story; rich details and a varied word choice may embellish the unfolding of events; and dialogue may enhance characterization or make the story line more concrete and interesting. However, in creating an effective, well-developed narrative, the student is not limited to these four particular methods of elaboration; other methods may work equally well.

Examples of the levels of elaboration, based on the prompt on page 86, are listed below:

SERIES OF UNELABORATED IDEAS

> The boy and his dog woke up. They walked to the cave. Then they went home.

Note: All of the following examples of elaboration focus on the second sentence ("They walked to the cave").

EXTENDED IDEA

> The boy and his dog woke up. They slowly walked to the dark cave and looked in. Then they went home.

The addition of the adverb "slowly" and the adjective "dark" makes the beginning of the story more interesting by creating a clearer image of the cave and the way the boy and his dog approach it. The phrase "and looked in" adds an additional piece of information to the story line.

SOMEWHAT ELABORATED IDEA

> The boy and his dog woke up. They slowly walked to the dark cave and looked in. They saw littel lites flying all arond the cave. The lites were blenking on and off.

The last two sentences provide a specific description of the inside of the cave, adding vividness and substance to the story line.

MODERATELY ELABORATED IDEA

> The boy and his dog woke up. They slowly walked to the dark cave and looked in. They saw littel lites flying all arond the cave. The lites were blenking on and off. "The boy said I am afrad, mabe there marshuns." Your silly. There only litning bugs his dog said." Then they went home.

The addition of dialogue serves two purposes: it contributes to character development, and it allows the writer to show the reader, rather than simply to tell, what happens in the story.

Elaboration in "How-To" Writing

In writing a "how-to" response, the writer may achieve elaboration through a thorough, unambiguous, specific description of each step or stage in a process or activity. This type of description facilitates the reader's complete understanding so that he or she could easily visualize or even replicate the process or activity simply by using the response as a guide.

Examples of the levels of elaboration, based on the prompt on page 122, are listed below:

SERIES OF UNELABORATED IDEAS

> I wake up. I get out of bed. Next I walk downstars. Then I eat my brekfust.

Note: All of the following examples of elaboration focus on the fourth sentence ("Then I eat my brekfust").

EXTENDED IDEA

> Then I eat my brekfust. My daddy maks me ceral and oreng jus.

The extension adds information that more specifically explains who makes the writer's breakfast ("daddy") and what constitutes breakfast ("ceral and oreng jus").

SOMEWHAT ELABORATED IDEA

> Then I eat my brekfust. My daddy maks me ceral and oreng jus. I lik crunche ceral the best and daddy puts bannas in them.

The writer adds two more pieces of information to one of the ideas ("ceral") introduced in the extension. Because this additional description is both specific and relevant, it allows the reader to understand more completely the "brekfust" step in the sequence, thereby improving the quality of the elaboration in this section of the response.

MODERATELY ELABORATED IDEA

> Then I eat my brekfust. My daddy maks me ceral and oreng jus. I lik crunche ceral the best and daddy puts bannas in them. Usally I eat at the kichen tabble. But some time I wach bugs bunny on tv when I eat.

The last two sentences provide the reader with additional specific information about the writer's breakfast experience by focusing on where the writer eats breakfast. Note that in the original series of unelaborated ideas, there was no detail whatsoever about this experience; it simply occupied a particular place in the sequence. Moderately elaborating on this idea, however, allows the writer to include what he or she eats for breakfast, who makes it, and where he or she eats it. This type of thoroughness creates effective elaboration and, combined with elaboration of other steps in the process, leads the reader to a more complete understanding of how the writer gets ready for school in the morning.

RETHINKING AND CLARIFYING THE DRAFT: THE REVISION STAGE

What is Revision?

Revision can be thought of as a three-part process: asking questions about a piece of writing, exploring alternative ways to express ideas, and deciding what changes to make in the piece. Revision occurs whenever the writer reexamines a piece of writing and makes changes so that the writing better communicates his or her thoughts. The changes made during the revision process may include any elements that make the message more effective. The writer may look at such features as organization, word choice, sentence structure, elaboration, and purpose. The writer may add, delete, substitute, or reorganize material. During this phase of the writing process, the writer focuses on content--what ideas to express and how to express them--leaving the correction of usage and mechanical errors for a later time.

Helping Students to Revise

An assumption sometimes made is that students can look at their writing and know what needs to be improved and what kinds of changes to make. In reality, students need to be shown how to revise. Without experience in revision, young writers may tend to see their first draft of a piece as a finished product. When given the opportunity to do a second draft, they may merely recopy their first draft more neatly, occasionally making a few mechanical corrections. Students need to be shown revision strategies and to be given frequent opportunities to practice them. Below are several ideas on teaching revision that some teachers have found to be helpful.

Modeling

Modeling revision for students can be very beneficial, particularly in the early stages of writing instruction and with very young writers. It is helpful for beginning writers to see examples of the kinds of questions one can ask about a piece of writing and of the kinds of changes that one might make to a piece. One way to model revision is to work with the class on a piece of writing displayed on a chart or transparency. This might be an anonymous piece, a sample of the teacher's own writing, or a paper from the class (but one without too many distracting mechanical errors). By asking the students appropriate questions about the piece and getting their input on both the strengths of the writing and the ways in which it might be improved, the teacher is actually providing students with concrete examples of how to approach revision of their own writing.

Conferencing

Talking to students one-on-one in brief conferences about their own writing allows the teacher to focus on the specific strengths, needs, and writing difficulties of each student. It also provides an additional opportunity to model revision. While it is important to teach young writers how to improve upon their writing, it may be even more important to teach them to value what they have written. Therefore, an important first step in working with individual students is to identify the strengths of the piece of writing. In addition to the powerful motivational advantage of helping a beginning writer to value his or her writing, emphasizing its strengths helps the writer to see what parts of the writing are most appealing to the reader and should therefore be expanded and emphasized. Once a piece's strengths have been addressed, then possible revisions can be explored. It may be useful, particularly when revising with beginning writers, to focus on only one or two revision issues at a time so that the student does not feel overwhelmed.

Mini-Lessons

A critical component of helping students to revise is giving them the skills they need to make appropriate changes. One way to demonstrate these skills in the context of student writing is to use "mini-lessons"--brief lessons focusing on a specific problem or revision strategy and using sample writing to illustrate the point. For example, a mini-lesson about sentence fragments might involve identifying the fragments in a piece of writing and having the class transform them into complete sentences. A lesson on elaboration might involve examining a piece of writing to show how more specific language would improve the overall effectiveness of the piece. Students could then be given the opportunity to apply the same principle to a piece of their own writing.

Peer Revision

One effective way for students to learn to revise is to read (or hear) each other's work. Beginning writers can learn a great deal about writing from both giving and receiving feedback. However, it is important that students be trained in this process and that they be given specific guidelines, such as questions to ask about a piece of writing (e.g., What was this piece of writing about?), phrases to use (e.g., The part I liked best was . . .), a checklist, or some other tool to help focus their attention.

Shared Responsibility

During the revision process it is important for the student to feel a sense of responsibility for his or her own writing. For example, it may be useful to allow the student to choose the piece of writing he or she will revise, to make the final decisions about what changes to make, and to write in the changes himself or herself. The student is more likely to feel fully involved in the revision process when he or she retains some control over the piece.

"Marking Up" A Draft

In addition to helping beginning writers with the tasks of examining a piece of writing and of deciding what changes to make, it may be useful to show them how to mark these changes on their drafts. They may benefit from practical suggestions for managing revision, such as double-spacing on each draft to leave room to write in changes, writing drafts on one side of the paper so that they can cut and paste, crossing out words rather than trying to erase them, and circling words that they want to come back to later. It is particularly important for the student to see that "messing up" the paper is perfectly acceptable and is, in fact, an important component of revision.

Practice

In order to learn how to revise, students must have the opportunity to practice frequently with many different kinds of writing. The more opportunities they have to revise, the more they are likely to internalize the process and apply it to their writing independently.

Questions to Ask About a Piece of Writing

Improving a piece of writing involves asking many different kinds of questions about the piece. Behind the larger question of how the message may be communicated most effectively lie a myriad of smaller questions pertaining to such issues as purpose, clarity, organization, elaboration, word choice, and sentence structure. Some of the kinds of questions that might be addressed with respect to a piece of writing include the following:

Purpose and Topic

What is the piece about?
What is the author's purpose for writing?
Has the writer stayed on topic?

Clarity

Are all parts clear to the reader?
Has information been left out that the reader needs to know?

Organization

Is there a more effective or logical way to arrange the ideas?
Are there parts of the piece that are unnecessary?
Has the writer repeated the same ideas unnecessarily?
Are there digressions? Loose ends?
Are transitions clearly marked?
Is there a beginning, middle, and end?

Word Choice

Has the writer used words correctly?
Has the writer used specific, concrete words rather than vague, general words?
Has the writer used active verbs?
Is the language vivid?

Elaboration

Has the writer provided details and specific examples?
Has the writer used anecdotes and illustrations where appropriate?
Has the writer developed the ideas fully?
Has the writer developed ideas consistently throughout the paper?

Sentence Structure

Are the sentences complete?
Are the sentences clear?
Has the writer used a variety of sentence structures?
Has the writer combined ideas where appropriate to produce more effective sentences?

Questions such as these may provide a useful starting point when working with students to revise a piece of writing. Once students have experience answering questions about their writing from a teacher or their peers, they can begin to internalize the process, asking these kinds of questions for themselves. To further this process, some students may benefit from the use of a revision checklist. A checklist might consist initially of one or two questions worded very simply. The list could then be expanded as students acquire additional revision skills. For younger students, a checklist might include questions such as the following:

What is my topic?
Is there anything else the reader needs to know?
Are there any parts of the piece that are confusing?
Are there parts of the piece I don't really need?
Are there better words I could use?
Are my sentences complete sentences?
Did I use different kinds of sentences?
Did I put everything in the best possible order?
Does my piece have a beginning and an ending?

While there are many different kinds of questions that can be asked about a piece of writing, it is important not to overwhelm the student by addressing too many questions at once. Particularly with young writers, it may be preferable to focus on one or two issues at a time. Every issue does not need to be addressed in every piece of writing.

Revision Strategies With Very Young Writers

The revision strategies that very young writers use may differ from those used by older writers. In some cases, teaching young children to revise may consist primarily of showing them how to add more to their work--how to add details for clarity, for example, or how to sustain a story. In order to learn to think about the words they have used in a piece and what other words might work better, young children may also particularly benefit from assistance with word choice.

Revising for TAAS

The ability to "resee" a piece of writing and to make appropriate changes to it helps the student to communicate more effectively on all kinds of tasks, including responding to a TAAS prompt. Writing for TAAS is different from classroom writing assignments in two important ways. First, the student does all the writing in one session. Secondly, the student does not have access to outside resources, such as peer feedback, the teacher, a dictionary, or a grammar book. For these reasons the TAAS composition is scored as a first-draft effort. However, this is not to say that the TAAS writer should not revise. In order to be successful on the TAAS written composition, the writer needs to organize and develop his or her ideas to accomplish a specific writing purpose, activities that are very much tied to revision. The student who has internalized the writing process should know how to reexamine his or her composition without any teacher assistance. That student should be able to use revision to increase the effectiveness of the response.

In order to be successful on the TAAS written composition, students need experience revising with all types of writing eligible for assessment. As students are practicing a particular type of writing, it may be helpful to work with them on revision issues specific to that type of writing, in addition to the more general issues discussed on pages 31-32. Some points that could be examined include the following:

<u>Informative/Descriptive</u>

Is the picture described in enough detail that someone who hasn't seen it could draw it accurately?
Are specific, concrete words used rather than vague, general words?
Does the description tell where elements are located in the picture?
Does the writer proceed in an orderly fashion (describing one element fully before moving on to the next element)?
Is there extraneous material that doesn't add to the quality of the description?

Expressive/Narrative

Does the writer use specific and vivid details to enhance the story line?
Does the story move forward through time?
Does the story have a clear beginning and ending?
Are there any confusing spots where the writer needs to provide more information?
Does the story have any unexplained shifts in time or location?
Is there extraneous material that interrupts the flow of the story?

Informative/Narrative ("How To")

Does the writer fully explain each step of the process so that someone else could repeat the process?
Does the writer use specific details to make each step of the process clear and vivid?
Does the writer list the steps in the right order?
Does the writer move in an orderly fashion, completing one step before moving on to the next step?
Does the writer use transitional words to move from step to step?

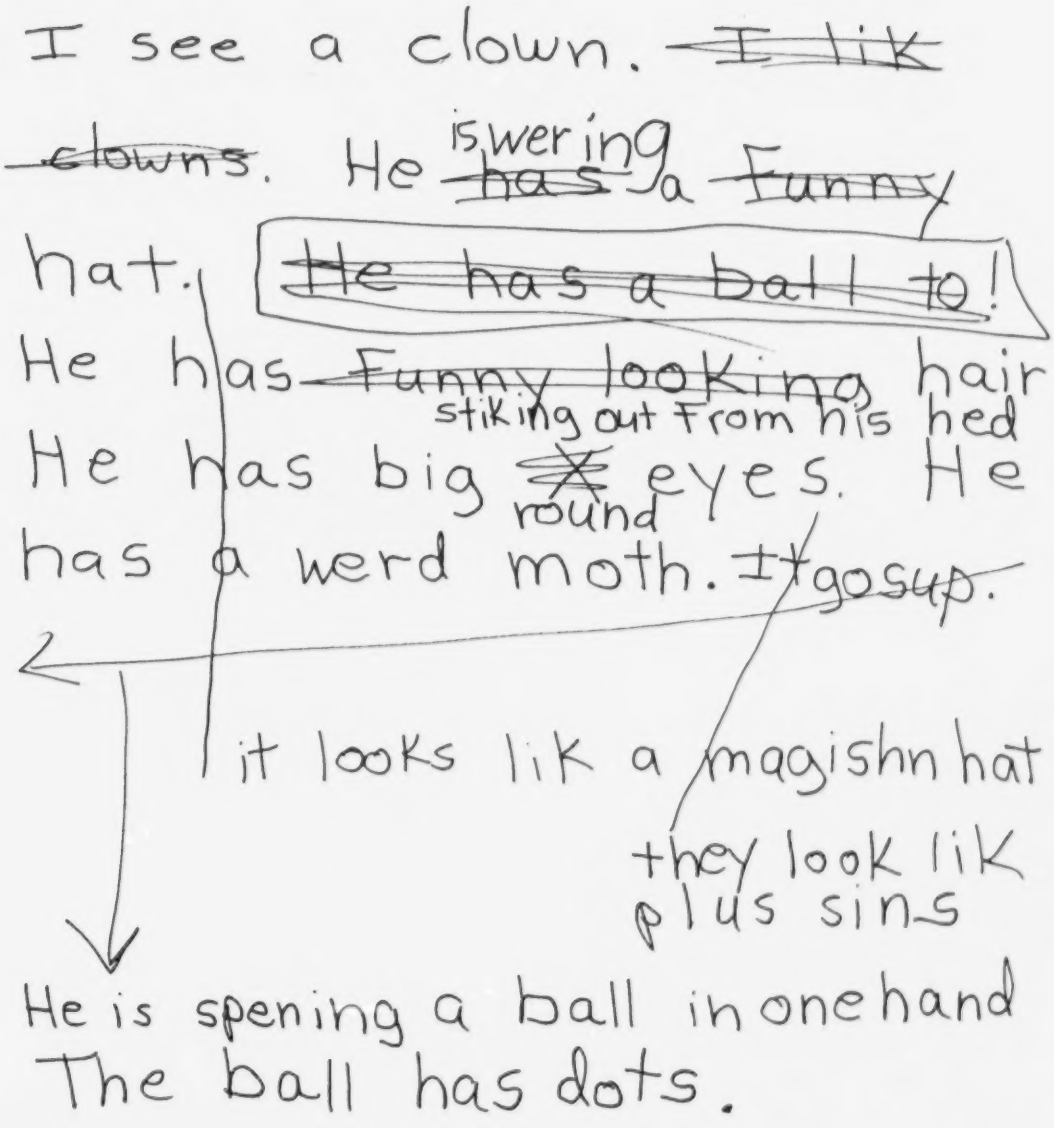
Examples: Revision and TAAS

The writing process for TAAS may take many forms. One student may brainstorm to develop a list of ideas, then rearrange and expand those ideas into a final product. Another may write a rough draft, then mark up that draft extensively before writing a second draft on the lined pages. A third student may do much of the revision work internally, writing just a few notes before moving into a final version.

Following are annotated examples of some of the many ways a student writer may apply the writing process to a TAAS prompt. These examples are based on the prompts included in this handbook. Each example represents a small portion of an entire piece of writing and includes a prewriting activity or first draft, revisions, and a final version. Although the final version of each example has been typed, the original student spelling, capitalization, and punctuation have been kept.

Informative/Descriptive Writing

FIRST DRAFT


I see a clown. ~~I lik~~
~~clowns~~. He ~~has~~ iswering a ~~Funny~~
hat. ~~He has a ball to~~!
He has ~~Funny looking~~ hair
stiking out from his hed
He has big ~~eyes~~ round eyes. He
has a werd moth. ~~It go sup~~.
it looks lik a magishn hat
they look lik
plus sins
He is spening a ball in one hand
The ball has dots.

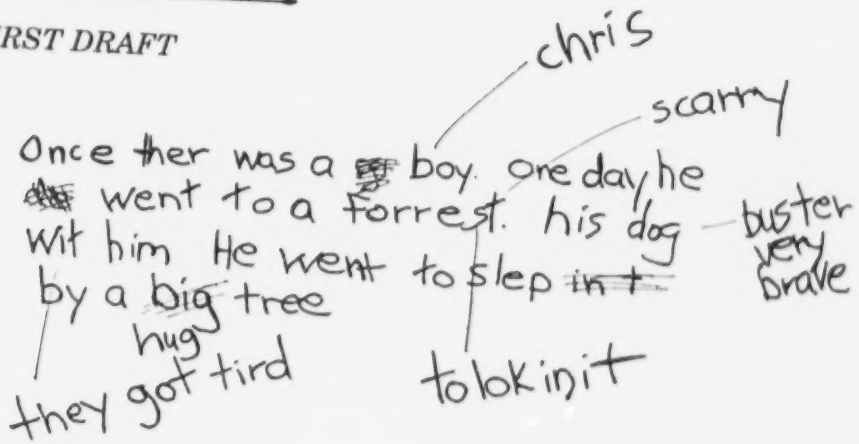
FINAL DRAFT

I see a clown. He is wering a hat. It looks like a magicns hat. He has hair that stiks out from his hed. He has big round eyes that have plus sins in the midle of them. He has a moth that gos up on both sides. He is spening a ball in one hand. The ball has dots all over it.

Comments: A number of different kinds of changes have been made between the first and the second draft. The description has become much more specific and detailed. For example, words like "funny" and "funny-looking" have been replaced with more specific descriptors. The writer has also reorganized the ideas, placing the description of the ball after the description of the clown's face. Finally, a line that doesn't contribute to the descriptive function of the paper ("I lik clowns") has been deleted.

Expressive/Narrative Writing

FIRST DRAFT



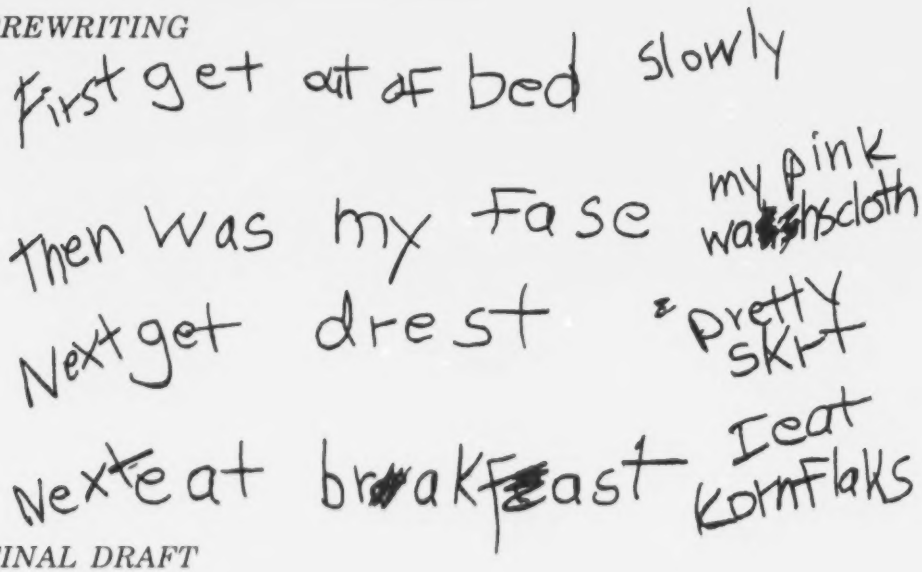
FINAL DRAFT

Once there was a boy. His name was Chris. Chris livd by a dark scarry forrest One day he went to the forrest to see wat ther was in it. His brave litl dog Buster went with him. Chris and Buster walkd a verry long time and they got rel tired So Chris desidd to tak a nap. so he went to selp by a hugge shady tree.

Comments: The second draft of this piece answers the questions that were raised in the first draft. Gaps have been filled in, and details have been added. The reader now has a better understanding of who the boy and the dog are, why they are in a forest, and why the boy is sleeping.

Informative/Narrative ("How-To") Writing

PREWRITING


First get out of bed slowly
then was my fase my pink washcloth
Next get drest pretty skirt
Next eat brakfeast I eat kornflaks

FINAL DRAFT

This is how I get ready for school. First I get out of bed. I get out of bed real slow becaus I dont lik to get up. Then I make my bed. Somtims my mom helps me. Next I wash my fase with my favrite pink waschloth. But sometims I have to wait for my bruther to finesh in the batroom. He always takes to long! Then I get dresed. If its real cold I put on a sweter and long pants. But mostly I wear a shirt and a pretty skirt. My favrite part of geting ready is when I eat brakfast. My mom lets me have watever I want. Somtimes I eat cornflaks.

Comments: This student has gone straight from prewriting to a final draft, adding a few notes to the prewriting, then making additional changes beyond those marked on the prewriting page. To the original list of major activities, the writer has added transition words, more details about each step, and one more step not included in the original list (making the bed).

"CLEANING UP" THE DRAFT: THE EDITING STAGE

What is Editing?

Once the writer has generated ideas, developed them into a draft, and revised the piece for content and organization, he or she is ready to address the grammatical and mechanical errors in a piece. In this handbook this stage of the writing process is referred to as the editing stage. The term "editing" is used to refer to all of the activities and strategies that the writer uses to remove errors from a piece of writing. The word "proofreading," often used synonymously with editing, is used in this handbook to refer to the final reading of a piece, during which the writer makes a final check for remaining errors.

Addressing error correction only after the writer feels satisfied with the content and organization of a piece can be particularly beneficial for young writers. It is sometimes difficult for children to concentrate on more than one task at a time. If the child becomes overly concerned about errors in the early stages of writing a piece, he or she may be distracted from the task of deciding what to say and how to say it. In addition, he or she may be less apt to take compositional risks and more likely to focus on whether or not each word or sentence is "right." On the other hand, if the child knows that errors will be addressed in the final stages of writing a piece, he or she is free to concentrate on the effective communication of ideas during the early stages of writing.

Helping Students to Edit

To say that correcting errors might best be done in the later stages of writing is not to say that editing is not important. Errors interfere with communication by impeding the reader's ability to understand the ideas the writer is trying to communicate. Therefore, it is important for the writer to learn how to identify and correct errors before pronouncing a piece to be finished.

Helping student writers to edit their work may involve many of the same strategies as helping them to revise. For example, it may be particularly helpful to model editing, to provide frequent opportunities for practice, and to allow the student to select the pieces that he or she will edit.

Editing Strategies

Editing can be approached in many different ways. Following are a number of ideas that some teachers have used effectively to manage editing in the classroom.

- Cultivate a healthy attitude toward errors

Correcting errors is an integral part of the writing process. Cultivating a healthy attitude toward errors may be very reassuring for young writers, who need to understand that all writers make errors and that making errors does not mean they are poor writers.

- Hold editing conferences

The purpose of the editing conference is to work on the individual student's strengths and weaknesses. The editing conference focuses specifically on error removal and mechanical skills rather than on content or organization. Like the revision conference, the editing conference should begin with identification of strengths and successes. When working individually with young writers, it may be most beneficial to address one or two types of errors at a time. Concentrating on only one or two skill areas at a time allows the student to master and internalize those skills more readily than if he or she tries to absorb a wide range of mechanics and usage rules all at once.

- Have the student read a piece several times for different purposes

The successful editor uses a variety of techniques to find different kinds of errors. For example, when checking for end marks, the editor reads carefully for sentence sense; but for capitalization of the first word of a sentence, the editor skims to an end mark and checks thoroughly only the next word. One technique for identifying errors, then, is to read through a piece several times, focusing each time on a particular type of error.

- Have the student check the piece against a checklist

This may be an individual checklist developed for each student and attached to his or her writing folder. It may also be a large, more generic chart used by all students. The checklist, whether for an individual or a group, may be modified as students acquire additional skills.

- Have the student identify possible misspellings on early drafts

When a student is not sure of the spelling of words, circling or underlining them immediately has several advantages. If the student writes the word several times during drafting, the word may begin to look acceptable, and the student may forget his or her initial uncertainty about the spelling. By marking the problem words early on, the student acquires the habit of identifying words that need to be checked. In addition, this allows the student to continue to write without being distracted by concerns about possible spelling errors.

- Have the student read backwards for spelling errors

One technique to help student writers find spelling errors they might overlook in a quick reading is to have them read the paper backwards, looking at one word at a time and looking specifically for spelling errors.

- Have the student keep a list of frequently misspelled words

Another technique to help students minimize spelling errors is to have each student keep a list of words that he or she frequently misspells and, during the editing process, check each piece of writing to be edited against that list.

- Use peer editing

Peer editing can be an important source of feedback for young writers when those giving feedback are given specific guidelines to follow. One way to use peer editing is to have an editing circle, in which a paper is passed around a small group, with each member looking at the paper for a different type of error. Another way to use peer editing is to have several stronger students function as an editing team to whom the other students can bring their work.

- Create an editing table

One way to manage the editing phase is to have an editing table where students may go to use dictionaries and other resources necessary for successful editing. An editing team might sit at this table as well.

- Have the student proofread the final draft before turning it in

After applying various editing strategies, the student may want to do a final proofreading to check for any remaining errors. Reading the piece aloud may be particularly useful during this stage. If the student has recopied a piece, he or she may want to compare the recopied version word-for-word with the previous version.

- Act as the final editor

One of the most important aspects of teaching writing is teaching students to internalize the writing process and to use all the resources available to them. When student writers learn to edit, they discover procedures they can use to correct their own work. When a student has gone through all of these procedures and pronounces a piece to be finished, then the piece is ready for the teacher, who will be the final editor.

- Spare the red pen

In order to encourage beginning writers to take compositional risks, it is critical to reinforce risk-taking. One way to do this is to be very sparing in marking up a paper, particularly in correcting errors. Marking all of the

errors on a paper can both discourage and overwhelm the young writer. One alternative to circling all of the errors on a piece is to record the kinds of errors made on a separate note card, limiting comments made on the piece itself to one or two types of errors. These cards can then serve as a resource for the teacher in planning instruction and future editing conferences.

- Publish selected pieces of writing

"Publishing" selected pieces of writing may help students to view their writing as a way to communicate a message and may provide them with a motivation for finding and correcting errors. Publication of a piece may be accomplished in any number of ways, such as posting it on a bulletin board or creating a class "book" that contains a piece of writing from everyone in the class.

Helping Students to Master Mechanical Skills

An important part of learning to edit for errors is learning correct usage and mechanics. Students cannot edit for errors in a language skill that they have not yet acquired. Some of the kinds of skills that might be addressed in the classroom include:

- Punctuation
- Capitalization
- Spelling
- Subject-verb agreement
- Tense usage
- Sentence structure

Below are some specific strategies that teachers might use to help young writers improve their skills in language usage and mechanics.

- Teach skills in the context of student writing

Many teachers have reported that usage and mechanics are best learned when taught in the context of student writing rather than in isolation through drills and exercises. When students apply their knowledge of a skill to their own writing, they often develop a "feel" for the skill, an experience that students learning through worksheets do not seem to share.

- Teach skills through mini-lessons

One way to teach skills in the context of student writing is to begin with a mini-lesson on a specific skill, illustrating that skill through a piece of writing. Students can then work in small groups on a specific task related to the skill in question. For example, the teacher may present a lesson on end punctuation by having groups look at end punctuation in a piece of writing. Each student then examines the end punctuation in a piece of his or her own writing.

- Reinforce skill acquisition through writing

Once a skill has been presented, it can be reinforced by having students focus on that skill in a particular piece of writing, by having them add it to the editing checklist, or, for students who are having particular difficulties, by conferencing with them on that skill.

- Teach skills as the need arises

An important question in teaching language skills is that of order of presentation. One solution is to examine student writing, presenting those skills which are posing particular difficulties for the students. For example, if students have become interested in writing dialogue for a narrative, a presentation on the use of quotation marks would be timely.

- Have students write often

One of the most effective ways for students to learn language skills is to write often. The more practice young writers have writing, revising, and editing, the better their language skills will likely become.

- Have students read frequently

Students learn writing skills through reading as well as through writing. Once they become familiar with the writing process, they will begin to look at reading from the point of view of a writer and will begin to notice how authors use language and mechanics.

Editing and the TAAS Composition

Because the TAAS composition is written in one sitting and because it is scored as a first-draft effort, editing is less critical on the TAAS written composition than are some other aspects of the writing process. However, students who have learned to edit their own work will be able to scrutinize their compositions and identify and correct many of the errors. While they cannot check their spelling in a dictionary, they can look over punctuation, capitalization, and usage, applying the language skills they have acquired at the time of testing. In addition, they can proofread for careless errors.

Editing/Proofreading and the Multiple-Choice Portion of TAAS

Students are asked to apply editing and proofreading skills on the multiple-choice portion of the TAAS test. This portion of the TAAS test assesses students' mastery of the conventions of standard English, as well as their ability to edit and proofread. Because these skills are assessed in the context of reading and correcting a written passage, the best preparation for the

multiple-choice section of the TAAS writing test is to teach students to find and correct the errors in their own or a peer's writing.

Three skill areas are assessed in the multiple-choice portion of the TAAS writing test: sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. These skill areas correspond to Objectives 5, 6, and 7 of the *TAAS English Language Arts Writing Objectives and Measurement Specifications.*

Sentence Structure

Objective 5: The student will recognize appropriate sentence construction within the context of a written passage.

At Grade 3, items for this objective will assess the following instructional target:

- Recognize complete sentences and avoid fragments

These skills are tested in the context of a passage which contains both fragments and complete sentences. The student looks at an underlined portion of the passage and decides whether that portion is a fragment or is a correct sentence. If the underlined portion is a fragment, then the student is asked to select the corrected version of that fragment. If the sentence is correct, the student merely marks "No mistake." This process is very similar to what occurs when a student identifies fragments in his or her own writing and attempts to rewrite them correctly.

Usage

Objective 6: The student will recognize appropriate English usage within the context of a written passage.

At Grade 3, items for this objective will assess the following instructional targets:

- Recognize correct person and number of regular verbs and irregular verbs with simple subjects, including personal pronouns
- Recognize correct verb tense and correct form of tense of regular verbs
- Recognize correct verb tense and correct form of tense of irregular verbs

These skills are again tested in the context of a written passage. The passage contains numbered blanks. For each blank the student must decide which of four choices would correctly complete the sentence. This activity represents the kind of decision-making young writers attempt when editing their own writing.

Mechanics

Objective 7: The student will recognize appropriate spelling, capitalization, and punctuation within the context of a written passage.

At Grade 3, items for this objective will assess the following instructional targets:

- Use the fundamentals of spelling
- Use appropriate capitalization
- Use the fundamentals of punctuation

This objective, like Objective 5, assesses the student's ability to look at a piece of writing and to identify errors in the piece. The student reads a brief passage containing several underlined sections, each of which may have an error in spelling, capitalization, or punctuation. Just as he or she must do when reviewing his or her own writing, the student must first decide whether an error exists and, if so, which kind of error it is. This section assesses the student's ability to apply proofreading skills to a piece of writing. As with the other sections of the multiple-choice portion of the test, the more experience a student has editing and proofreading pieces of writing, the better he or she will be likely to perform on the test items.

Part 2
TAAS Scoring Guides
and
Sample Student Responses

TAAS Grade 3 Scoring Guide for Informative / Descriptive Writing

DESCRIPTIVE

This is a picture of a clown. Look at the picture and describe what you see.

51

SCORE POINT 0

0 = RESPONSES THAT ARE NOT SCORABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE BLANK OR FAIL IN OTHER WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE TASK. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "0" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses in which the student writes on an entirely different topic than the one specified.***
- ***Responses in which the student makes an attempt to respond, but this attempt contains so little writing that the reader cannot discern whether the student is responding to the prompt.***
- ***Responses in which the student repeats or paraphrases the prompt but does not attempt to respond to it.***
- ***Responses in which the student writes entirely in a language other than English.***
- ***Responses that are completely unreadable because they are illegible or incoherent.*** Illegible responses are those in which the handwriting cannot be read; letters may be discernible, but they do not form recognizable words. Incoherent responses are those in which letters or words are strung together in a meaningless fashion.
- ***Responses that contain nothing more than an explicit refusal to respond to the specified prompt, although the student may offer some explanation of his or her refusal.***
- ***Blank papers.***

SCORE POINT 1

1 = RESPONSES THAT ARE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT PAINTING A PICTURE OF THE OBJECT OR SCENE IN THE READER'S MIND. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "1" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that do not include the requisite components of informative/descriptive writing.*** In these responses the writer does not use descriptive words and/or phrases to paint a picture of the object or scene specified in the prompt.

- ***Responses that are informative/descriptive but are unsuccessful in their presentation.*** Responses that attempt to describe but are not successful may take the following forms:

  - Responses that contain a brief phrase with some indication of an attempt to attend to the task.

  - Responses that are lists of descriptive words and/or phrases.

  - Responses that are so brief and unelaborated that the reader can obtain only a vague impression of the picture.

  - Responses that contain elaboration, but the elaboration is mainly nonspecific or extraneous.

  - Responses that attend very briefly to the task but do not remain on the topic. These responses acknowledge the assignment but then switch to another topic.

- ***Responses that are poorly organized.*** These responses are so poorly organized that the reader is confused and is unable to discern even a vague picture of the scene or object. Poor organization may be caused by major gaps, excessive rambling, and/or repetition.

- ***Responses that exhibit an overall lack of control of written language so that communication is impaired.*** The expression of the writer's thoughts is so confusing that the reader is left wondering what the writer is attempting to say.

  - At the word level there may be repeated errors in the spelling of basic words, in word choice, and/or in usage.

  - At the sentence level confusion occurs when words are not arranged in a logical order, or when there is an apparent order but the meaning is nevertheless unclear. It is inappropriate for readers to guess at the writer's intent or to make inferences about the writer's meaning.

  - At the composition level responses lack explicit connections between ideas, and attempts at illustrations of ideas are either irrelevant or repetitious.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

THE CLOWN

He has round pants.
He is spining a ball.
He is holding a brid with
pruls. He has a Big shose.
He is stand on a peaie of
string And He has a pigred
nose.

This response is an attempt at description but is unsuccessful since the writer fails to do more than randomly list phrases that briefly describe a small set of the clown's features. Because this description is sparse, the reader is able to obtain only a vague impression of the picture. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to elaborate to a greater extent on the features/objects in the picture through the use of specific language. Including descriptions of more features as well as locating one feature in relation to another would also improve the overall quality of the response.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

hat on clon hed an clon curle hir lik a bysh. clon is steadg on a rop shoas on a rop ann crost eiis. a cricess Bobo namm clon. the big shrt 3 boaten. a tall spenig dott ball. rand grenn strig sok. his brd fon sit. a happy brd. happy clon in the cricess. Bobo wit a red nos an pan sheps is it.

It is obvious that the writer saw the prompt and attempted to respond to it. This response, however, is unsuccessful because of the overall lack of control of written language. This lack of control--evidenced by extensive misspellings, missing words, and illogical arrangement of words in sentences--impedes the reader's ability to understand what the writer is attempting to say. The writer needs remediation both in language mechanics and in sentence structure. Since the writer also needs to develop greater fluency, he or she would benefit from being given many opportunities to write.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The clown is at the circus! The clown has a bird on his hand. The clown has a big red smile on his silly face. The clown has a ball on his finger turning. And the clown has funny looking clothing and he has big giant shoes. and he has a hat shor was that clown funny. and he had funny Looking socks on his feet and he had green eyyes and he had a big nose that was deffrent corleres that had red blue green yellow wite whith black on it the clown was very very very funny. his clothing was yellow green and his sirt was green to and his shoes where black. He had orange hair and clown how was holding the bird. the bird was singing to the clown. shor was that Clown funny!

SCORE POINT 1

Although this response contains elaboration, the elaboration is ineffective for the most part because the writer's use of descriptive language is mainly nonspecific. The use of color words as primary descriptors throughout the response and the inclusion of general details like "silly face" and "funny looking socks" contribute very little to the reader's ability to form a specific mental picture of the scene. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to improve the overall quality of the elaboration by replacing the many generalities with specific words that paint a clearer picture of the clown's features.

EXT PAGE.

GO ON

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

He wers a little hat.
He is spening a ball.
He is stading an a string.
He is holeding a bird.
He has shape pans.
He has theer butens.
He has suspenders.
He has stripe sos.
He has a wight shirt.
He has lege shese with butens.
He has a rod nese.
He has wide haer.
He has wid esys.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

He has wid leps.
He has a wid face.
He has wid ers,
He has wid hads.

This response contains some specific description of the clown's features; for example, he "wers a little hat" and is "stading on a string." The response is insufficient for a higher score, however, because it also contains description that is nonspecific (e.g., color words like "wight" and "rod" and the excessive use of the word "wid"). The elaboration is also weakened because some features/objects that the writer describes are not located in the picture. The reader knows, for instance, that the clown is "spening a ball" and "has theer butens," but he or she does not know where the ball or buttons are in relation to the clown. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to include more specific details about the clown's features. Spatially locating the features/objects in relation to others in the picture (e.g., "He is spening a ball <u>on his finger</u>") would also improve the overall quality of the elaboration.

SCORE POINT 1

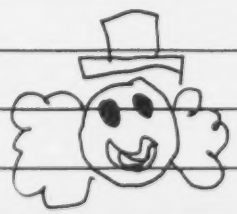
TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

"The funnyest Clown"

Once apon a time there lived a clown named Wiskers. Wiskers was the funnyest clown of all, One day wiskers put on a show, It was the best show they ever did. And you won't belive wat he did!!! He was showing off with his line he was balensed on, And it brok, Wiskers was being funny when he falled down, He did good tricks on the floor with the ball, He spined the ball all round him, He got dize, I was the only one who was laffing. He kep smiling at me but he had + signs in his eyes, He didn't see me. I had a great time ever with my family, now we have To go out to eat, Also the show is over.

THE END



IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

Although the writer includes some descriptive elements in this response, he or she does not include enough of the requisite components of informative/descriptive writing to be minimally successful. Instead of using descriptive language to paint a picture of the specified scene in the reader's mind, the writer has written a narrative based on the scene. The writer needs remediation in descriptive writing, especially with regard to how a description differs from a narrative.

SCORE POINT 1

STOP

SCORE POINT 2

2 = RESPONSES THAT REPRESENT MINIMALLY SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT PAINTING A PICTURE OF THE OBJECT OR SCENE IN THE READER'S MIND. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "2" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that present a minimally sufficient amount of descriptive details.*** These responses may take the following forms:
  - Responses that present a lengthy, unelaborated list of sentences containing descriptive details.
  - Responses that present a somewhat elaborated description of the picture.
  - Responses that include a substantial amount of nondescriptive writing. These responses include a somewhat elaborated description of the picture, but the description may be embedded in a narrative. The extraneous material does not assist in painting a clearer picture of the drawing in the reader's mind, though some of these responses may be well written.

- ***Responses in which the organization may be flawed by gaps, rambling, and/or repetition.*** Although these inconsistencies may disrupt the logical progression of the response, they do not cause confusion.

- ***Responses that exhibit limited control of written language.*** These responses may contain awkward or simple sentence structures, and word choice may be limited. In addition, the responses may include spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage errors that are likely to occur in first-draft writing.

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The Funny Clown

Once apon a time there was a clown he had a funny top hat on. He had curly stiking out hair. He was a funny clown!. He had big ears and crisscrosses for eyes and funny eyebrous. In both hands he held a big bird with a necklace on and a pokadoted ball. He had big bottoms. He had baggy pants on with shapes all over them. He has socks with stripes all over them. He has big shoes on. He is standing on a very low high wire. He is a very funny clown.

THE END

SCORE POINT 2

This response is a mixture of general and specific descriptive details, thereby causing it to be unevenly elaborated. General phrases like "big ears" and "funny eyebrous" are examples of ineffective elaboration; these generalities do not really assist the reader in forming a clear mental image of the scene. The writer's use of the word "funny" is particularly ineffective because it is excessive. Other descriptive details are general because they are not precisely enough located in the picture. For example, in the sentence about the bird and the ball the writer does not make clear to the reader that the bird is in one of the clown's hands and the ball is in the other. However, specifics such as "top hat," "crisscrosses for eyes," and "standing on a very low high wire" are examples of more effective elaboration. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to develop the features/objects more fully using more precise language and/or location.

XT PAGE.

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

A clown is wearing a big fat pance. He has triangles, sqares, stars, and circols. He is holding a bird and he is spining a ball. The clown is on a small hie wire. The clown is wearing shoese with three circols on each foot. The clown is wearing striped socks. The clown has three bottens on his shirt. The clown has a hat on.

Because this response is a somewhat elaborated description of the picture, it contains sufficient elaboration to achieve a 2. The writer presents descriptive details about a number of objects/features in the picture. Some of these details are specific (e.g., "The clown is on a small hie wire"), and at times the writer elaborates on a detail by adding additional, specific information. The writer's description of the clown's shoes is an example of this type of development. Instead of writing a general description (e.g., "The clown has shoes"), the writer presents a more specific, detailed description ("The clown is wearing shoese with three circols on each foot"). To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to add additional descriptive detail to the features/objects included in the response. When the writer focuses on a small set of features/objects in the picture, the addition of specific descriptive detail to <u>each</u> feature/object becomes especially important.

SCORE POINT 2

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The clown has flufie hair on the sides.
He has a top hat two.
He has a round nose.
He has litte ers.
He has crosses for eys.
He is smiling.
He has a painted mouth.
He is holding a duck with a neckeless.
He has a little neck.
He dosent have a coller.
He is wereing a tite shirt.
He is spinning a spotted ball on his finger.
He has big flopie shoes.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

He has stars and circles and other sapes on his pants.

He has stripe socks.

He is wereing spenders.

He has three buttens.

He is a nice clown.

This response is a minimally successful attempt at painting a picture of the clown in the reader's mind. The writer accomplishes this task by presenting a lengthy list of sentences that contain many specific descriptive details about the clown. There are several places where the writer stops to elaborate on the object/feature ("holding a duck with a neckeless," "spinning a spotted ball on his finger"); however, for the most part, the list of descriptive details is minimally elaborated. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to develop the features/objects in more detail. (Example: "He is balincing on a rope. The rope is bending in the middle. The rope is tied to two poles that are touching the floor.")

SCORE POINT 2

STOP

Bozzo The Clown

D-9

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

Once apon a time there was a clown. The clowns name was Bozzo the clown. He was in a clown at and stading on a line. A ball was spining arond an arond an arond. It was on his finger. On his other hand there was a singing bird, with eyes lik a curve. The bird had a perl nekless an a beek an two wings. Bozzo the clown fond the bird in his yard. The bird was loss from her nest. It was a singing bird. The bird jumped in his hand lik a flower. The bird liked him. Bozzo the clown an the bird saw ech other ever day. They played an played an played. Bozzo the clown had a fack red nose on and big pants with shapes lik circls. His skoos had buttans lik the buttans on my blue shoos. Bozzo the clown was happy, so was the bird. The end.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

This response contains enough specific descriptive details to be minimally successful; however, the response also includes information that does not contribute to the writer's development of the description. For example, although the writer provides the reader with some details that assist in painting a clear picture of the bird, he or she also focuses on other details that are obvious. The sentence in which the writer states that the bird has "a beek an two wings" does not contribute to the effectiveness of the elaboration because all birds have a beak and two wings. Other information about the bird is simply nondescriptive and, therefore, extraneous. Sections like "The bird liked him. Bozzo the clown an the bird saw ech other ever day" are narrative and therefore do not contribute to the writer's description of the picture. Finally, the response contains some ineffective figurative language. The simile "The bird junped in his hand like a flower" does nothing to enhance the description. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to eliminate obvious, extraneous, and nonsensical information, replacing it with specific descriptive details. It would be especially important for the writer to learn the difference between effective and ineffective methods of elaboration in a description.

SCORE POINT 2

STOP

SCORE POINT 3

3 = RESPONSES THAT REPRESENT GOOD ATTEMPTS AT DESCRIBING THE PICTURE. THE READER HAS LITTLE DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE WRITER IS ATTEMPTING TO SAY. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "3" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that are good attempts at informative/descriptive writing.*** These responses may take the following forms:
  - Responses that present a well-elaborated description of a small set of features.
  - Responses that present a moderately well-elaborated description of some of the features.
  - Responses that present a number of features that are only somewhat elaborated but have an apparent organizational strategy, although minor gaps, rambling, and/or repetition may occur.
  - Responses that present a large number of specific descriptive details about the features but have no apparent organizational strategy. The details presented in these responses, however, are not contradictory.

- ***Responses that exhibit a clarity of expression, effective word choice, and a general control of the written language, although errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage may occur in these first-draft attempts.***

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

I see a funny clown with a black hat on his head. He has star eyes. And a red nose that looks like a apple. He has big ers. And orenge heir that is sticking to the side. He is holding a orenge and spinding oround like the earht. He has a neck. And a shirt that has bottons. And a red mohte. And he has wiht pants on him. On the pants there are stars, circle, trayen go, scereon them. He has some socks on him that have strips on them. He has some shos that have some bottons on them. And he has some mittens on his hand. He is standing on a string that is hold wiht two gray poles that are hold on the floor. He is holding a with bird that has a neckless on him. He has orenge legs from were the clown is holding him. The bird has his eyes close. He has his wing open. The bird has a long tile on him.

SCORE POINT 3

This response is a moderately elaborated, well-organized description of a number of features/objects in the picture. Although in some places the writer lists a specific detail with no additional elaboration (e.g., "He has star eyes"), in other places he or she presents a series of details that describe a single feature or object. Most of the time these series result in a somewhat elaborated description ("He is standing on a string that is hold wiht two gray poles that are hold on the floor"); however, the writer's description of the bird qualifies as moderate elaboration because a number of specific descriptive details have been added to the original idea of the clown holding the bird. To achieve a score point 4, the writer would need to elaborate more fully on the features/objects described in the response.

NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

I see a clown with a hat on top of his head and fuzzyy hair and big ears and a smile on his face and a big green nose and he is holding a ball on his thinger and a bird in the other hand and the bird is wheering a medalase and it is singing he has buttens on his shirt They have the number elleven on them and he has big baggy pants on with stars stryangls, retangls, and dots on them and he has got strips on his socks and big shose with big buttens on them and he is standing on a lember wire tide to too post on flat concrete.

This response is a moderately well-elaborated attempt to describe the picture. The response is organized and easy to follow and includes nothing extraneous. The writer concisely presents a number of specific details about many of the features/objects in the picture ("...and he is standing on a lember wire tide to two post on flat concrete"), which creates effective layering in the response. At times, however, the writer's description of the clown's features is general rather than specific ("big ears...and a big green nose"), creating "pockets" of ineffective elaboration in the response. Notice that the writer writes the response as one long sentence, linking each idea to the next with the word "and"; this problem is considered merely a first-draft error that does not cause confusion. To achieve a score point 4, the writer would need to add additional, specific details to describe more consistently and fully the clown's features, as well as the objects included in the picture.

SCORE POINT 3

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

I see a clown. He is holding a bird. The bird i wearing a neckles. With the other hand he is spining a ball. The ball has dotts all over it. The clown is walking over a tiny rope. The rope is very, very close to the ground. The clown is wearing a long sleve shirt. The shirt has three bottons down the mitel of the shirt. The clown is wearing suspinders. He is also wearing a little top hat. His hair is sticking out to the sides of him. He has a big green nose. He has croses for eay balls! He has big (ips! He is wearing pants. His pahts have stars, trianals,

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

rectangels, squares, and Circles. He has green and white striped socks. He has long shoes. He looks funny!

This response is a moderately elaborated description of the picture. For the most part, the writer uses both specific descriptive details and locations to create a clear image of the scene in the reader's mind. For example, the two sentences describing "the rope" include what it looks like (it is "tiny"), as well as where the clown is in relation to the rope ("walking over [it]") and where the rope is in relation to the ground ("very, very close to [it]"). The minor organizational weaknesses evident in the response are due to the fact that, although the writer's description of each feature/object is organized, he or she does not use an overall strategy to progress logically through the picture. The writer begins the response with a description of the bird, but the order chosen to describe the other features/objects in the picture appears to be a random one. (For example, there is no logical reason to describe the ball, the rope, and the clown's shirt in that particular order.) To achieve a score point 4, the writer would need to include additional, specific descriptive details, as well as to progress from feature to feature using a more logical arrangement (e.g., top to bottom, clockwise, or left to right).

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

TO describe a Clown

The clown has a ballin his hand He has a brid singing in the other hand. He has stars triangls squrs and cricls on his pants. He has fluffy hair. And a big nose. He has ovrols on. He has big holes in his shoes on. He has a smile. He has a hat on. He has bwtans on his shrit. H has croosed eys. He has big crse. He has striped scokes. He is standing on a short Hiewire. That is binding. He has long sleeves on. He is spening the ball. The brid has prise a rond it's neak. The brid has it's wings open up. He is standingon his tlpe tose. He has shorts on. The clown has big eidrows. He has crly hair. He is a tall clown. He has on big shorts and wide shorts. The Hiewire is on small stiks. He has on tite shorts. His hat is kind of croced. The brid is standing

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

up tall. The brid has a long tale. The clown has string in the butens. The clown has a spoted ball. The brid has hre esys closed. The clown has his esys closd. The clown's hued at the tope is balled His handls almost closed. The stick's are in th grond. The brid has ponid wings. He has a small neak. His finger's are to gether. His feet are to gather. The clown is white. The clown's pant's have rektayls to. the wire is rele close to the ground. The clowns hat is small. The shirt the clowne has on is tite on the sleeves. The brid has a beke. The sock's are tite on the clown. The brid is fat. The clowne has long arms. The shorts are about to fall off the clowne. The ball is spining fast. The brid has a skine neak. The shorts on the clowne are real short. The brid has feathers. The clowne is happy.

STOP

This response is completely disorganized, but the writer achieves a 3 by presenting a large number of specific descriptive details about the picture. The writer's organizational problems are twofold. First, he or she does not describe each feature completely before moving on to the next; instead, in order to add information, the writer often returns to features previously described. For example, the bird is described at the beginning of the response as "singing in the [clown's] other hand"; after moving on to a description of various other features in the picture, the writer returns to the bird, adding descriptive details in eight additional places. The writer's other organizational problem is that the order in which he or she chooses to describe the features/objects in the picture is purely random; that is, there is no logical progression from feature to feature. To achieve a score point 4, the writer would need to employ a clear organizational strategy.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

SCORE POINT 4

4 = RESPONSES THAT ARE CONSISTENT AND ELABORATED INFORMATIVE DESCRIPTIONS. THE INCONSISTENCIES THAT MAY OCCUR ARE OVERWHELMED BY THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE RESPONSE. THESE RESPONSES ARE CHARACTERIZED BY MOST OF THE FOLLOWING:

- ***A specific, well-elaborated description.*** Generally the writer will describe a lengthy set of features elaborated through the use of figurative language and/or rich detail.

- ***An organizational strategy that is, for the most part, apparent.*** Responses that are thorough and present a wealth of elaborated details may have organizational lapses.

- ***Consistent control of the written language.*** Though the writer may not incorporate all of the appropriate mechanics or conventions of language, the response is particularly effective.

  These responses may often contain some special feature:

  - Varied syntactic constructions, including compound and complex sentences.

  - Effective word choice, including vivid words, phrases, or expressions.

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

In the picture I see a funny clown. He's wering a small hat. He has cerly hair on the sides of his head. He has a face with a a big nose and a big smile on his face. He's wering a long sleve shirt with three butens on the shirt. on one arm he has a ball with spots on it and the ball is sping around on his finger and in his other arm he has a a pigen sprending his wings and closing his eyes and smiling. and the clown is wering big suspenders being held up by little ruber bands. On his suspenders the clown has shapes like stars squarres cicles and other shapes On the clowns ancles he is stripe long socks. And on the clowns feet the clowns wering long shoes with three butens on both of the long shoes. And the clown is is standing on a wire tied to two stick on both sides bye the clown.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

This response is a well-elaborated, well-organized description. The writer's use of specific descriptive details and precise location creates a vivid impression of the scene in the reader's mind. For example, the writer calls the clown's pants "suspenders" and gives the reader a number of specifics about them (e.g., the clown is wearing them, they are held up by little rubber bands, and they contain shapes like stars, squares, and circles). The writer also employs a consistent organizational strategy, beginning at the top of the clown's head and moving logically to the miniature high wire located at the bottom of the picture. This logical progression of thought contributes to the clarity and effectiveness of the response as a whole.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

When I went to the circus I saw a clown. The top of the hat was flat. It looked like a top hat. His eyes were closed it looked like they had little crosses on each one and his nose was round and green. He had a happy smile that cerved up. His ears were round and cervy a little. There was shagie hair behind his ears. He has a shirt on that has three buttons on it. There was a number eleven on each button. He had long sleeves he was twirrling the ball on one finger. The ball looked like it had little tiny spots on it. He was holding a bird on the other hand. The bird looked like it was fixing to fly the bird had a rubic neckles on its neck. The clown was so skinnie so the pants looked like they were huge for the clown. The pants looked like they had shapes on it there were stars, squers, circles, triangles and rectangels. He had on striped socks that were green. The shoes looked like they were huge like his pants too.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

The shoes had three buttons on eachone. He was standing on a big peice of string that were tied to two poles. When the circus was over I thought he was going to jump up.

In this response the specificity of the writer's language and the precision with which the writer locates each feature/object (e.g., "[the clown] was twirrling the ball on one finger. The ball looked like it had little tiny spots on it") combine to create a well-elaborated description. The writer also enhances the effectiveness of the response by encasing the description in a narrative framework (see first and last sentences) and employing a consistent "top to bottom" organizational strategy.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

There is a clown that I am going to write about.

There is a clown holding a bird in his other hand a ball is on finger spining. The clown has on big paints on and susponders even a blue shirt and white gloves. The shoes are big and red. The socks are red and white. The clown has a cute face I even like his cute flufy hair. His hat is so little that it dosen't even fit the clowns head. The clowns paints have stars circles triangles sqares and I rectangle. The clowns shirt is blue and has diffrent colored buttons. The clown is standing on a string with two poles holding it so the clown won't fall even on the bottem of the poles there are these circles to hold the clown but even the string is wavey. The ball has a lot of dots on it when it is on the clowns finger it makes this little sound and it makes some air but the clown balence the ball so it could stay on it finger. The bird is on the clowns other hand. The bird has a blue necklace around her neck. She has sharp claws. Her featherey tail is sticking out. Even her wings are sticking out And her eyes are closed. The birds beak is very big and wide. The bird is singing a song to the clown.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

The quality of the elaboration is uneven in this response. At the beginning most of the description is general ("blue shirt," "socks...red and white," "cute face"). However, the writer also presents many specific, well-elaborated details about the picture, especially in the second part of the response. As part of this elaboration, the writer includes both the location of the features/objects described and the relationship of one feature/object to another. For example, the writer describes the miniature high wire very precisely and clearly establishes where the clown is in relation to it. Even though the writer locates features/objects <u>in</u> space, there is an organizational weakness due to the fact that the writer does not employ any kind of strategy to move logically <u>through</u> space. This organizational weakness, however, is not severe enough to lower the student's score.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

In the picture there is a picture of a clown. He has a top hat on his head. The clown has hair that goes all over the place. His eyes are shaped like crosses. He has a nose just like an apple. On his face is a huge smile. He has a mouth like a hotdog bun. His ears are so big he hears more than any man on earth. On his neck there is a coller. On his long sleave shirt there are three buttons. In one of his hands there is a singing bird. The bird's mouth is likeg beek. On his neck there is a necklace with beads. She has her wings out because she is getting ready to fly. Her feet are in the clowns hand. Her tail look like a mursecns jacket. In his other hand there is a spinning ball. The ball has over twenty dots in it. It looks like the planet Mars is spinning. The clown is spinning it with one finger. The clown has unusual pants. The clown's pants have over alls.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

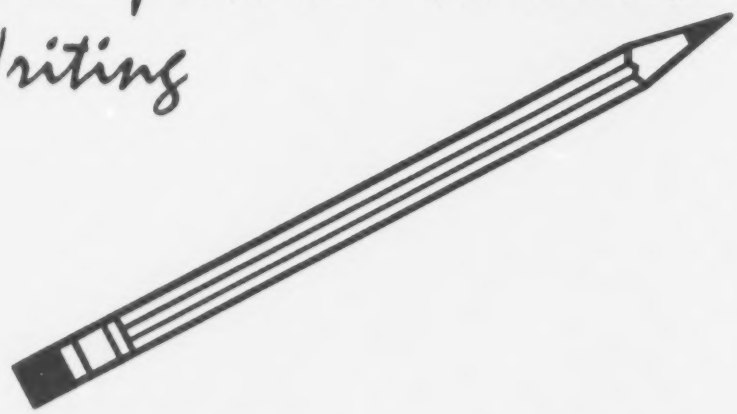
GO ON

His overralls has all diffrent kinds of shapes. They have triangles, stars squaresn rectangles and dimonds. The clown's socks bok like baseball socks. The clown's shoes are bigger than two banhas. The holes in his ~~shoes~~ are big enogh for a pair of sciccors. The clown is standing between two poles with a rope on it. I wish I was there.

This response is unified and well elaborated. The writer's effective word choice and use of precise location create a sense of fluency and paint a vivid picture of the scene in the reader's mind. The writer employs a clear organizational strategy, moving logically through the picture from top to bottom and describing fully one feature/object before moving on to the next. The quality of the description is enhanced by the inclusion of figurative language and "layers" of specific details. For example, the writer's description of the ball is moderately elaborated, allowing the reader to form an accurate mental image of it. Overall the response is well written and has a clear sense of order and completeness.

SCORE POINT 4

TAAS Grade 3 Scoring Guide for Expressive / Narrative Writing



NARRATIVE

Here is a picture of an unusual little dog who seems to need some help. Write a story about what happens next.

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SCORE POINT 0

0 = RESPONSES THAT ARE NOT SCORABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE BLANK OR FAIL IN OTHER WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE TASK. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "0" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses in which the student writes on an entirely different topic than the one specified.***
- ***Responses in which the student makes an attempt to respond, but this attempt contains so little writing that the reader cannot discern whether the student is responding to the prompt.***
- ***Responses in which the student repeats or paraphrases the prompt but does not attempt to respond to it.***
- ***Responses in which the student merely retells a known fairy tale or rhyme.***
- ***Responses in which the student writes entirely in a language other than English.***
- ***Responses that are completely unreadable because they are illegible or incoherent.*** Illegible responses are those in which the handwriting cannot be read; letters may be discernible, but they do not form recognizable words. Incoherent responses are those in which letters or words are strung together in a meaningless fashion.
- ***Responses that contain nothing more than an explicit refusal to respond to the specified prompt, although the student may offer some explanation of his or her refusal.***
- ***Blank papers.***

SCORE POINT 1

1 = RESPONSES THAT ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS THE TASK BUT ARE NOT SUCCESSFUL. THE FOLLOWING KINDS OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "1" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that do not include the requisite components of expressive/narrative writing.*** Some of these responses may contain events, but the events are not sequenced. Other responses may be merely informative or descriptive.

- ***Responses that are expressive/narrative but are unsuccessful in their presentation.*** Responses that attempt to address the task but are not successful may take the following forms:

  - Responses that contain a brief phrase with some indication of an attempt to attend to the task.

  - Responses that have so little writing that there are not enough details to sequence.

  - Responses that contain a sequence of events, but the sequence is not sustained sufficiently to be minimally successful.

  - Responses that attend very briefly to the task but do not remain on the topic. These responses acknowledge the assignment and then switch to another topic.

- ***Responses that are poorly organized or contain major gaps.*** In these responses the writer may present events in a random or repetitive fashion, thereby causing gaps that require the reader to infer the writer's intended thoughts; or the writer may ramble presenting numerous details that do not contribute to the story line.

- ***Responses that exhibit an overall lack of control of written language so that communication is impaired.*** The expression of the writer's thoughts is so confusing that the reader is left wondering what the writer is attempting to say.

  - At the word level there may be repeated errors in the spelling of basic words, in word choice, and/or in usage.

  - At the sentence level confusion occurs when words are not arranged in a logical order, or when there is an apparent order but the meaning is nevertheless unclear. It is inappropriate for the reader to guess at the writer's intent or to make inferences about the writer's meaning.

  - At the composition level responses lack explicit connections between ideas, and attempts at illustrations of ideas are either irrelevant or repetitious.

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

Title: What's that thing

Once upon a time there was a boy. He was very tired. He sat down to rest. He had went to sleep. He was uwonke by A dog. With a black coat and a green hat. And brown pants. What how did I get into the forest. The Bear said. There's Something The boy had woke up The boy took a closer look it was a poilerbear he wa awake The end

This response received a score of 1 for several reasons. The narrative has major gaps that cause confusion, the narrative sequence is not sufficiently sustained, and the writer abruptly ends the story rather than resolving the action. The response does have a clear beginning. The writer sets up the situation and provides specific details about the boy and the dog. However, once the boy and the dog have been introduced, the story "loses steam." There are major gaps after the line "And brown pants," making the rest of the narrative difficult to follow. For example, the reader doesn't know who this bear is and where it came from, nor is it clear who is doing the talking when the writer uses dialogue in this section. The writer also ends the story quickly rather than developing the story line. At the point where the boy sees that the bear is a "poilerbear," the writer stops abruptly rather than moving the plot forward to a logical conclusion. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to make a number of changes. He or she would need to add missing information so that all parts of the story are logically connected. In addition, he or she would need to develop the story more thoroughly and resolve the action by including additional events that complete the narrative progression. This writer needs remediation in how to develop a story line and would benefit from additional opportunities to write narratives. The writer may benefit from the use of prewriting activities to generate ideas and to elaborate on those ideas.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

Nest the dog was the kid up. Then he toled the boy who he wak the boy up. Then the dog bte, is fieg tord the cav and the. Boy go tup and her yan tas the, Cav he did not see iny tag in the Cav he witin. It was darck but he cued see a light and gust ten He sowa dor and then he wint In the dor and they war having a ptey. They in vitin the doy in thay as the doy. If he would like to goh tim and he sad yes and. The doy ased do yo wut to go outsid the doy asked he mostns asr yes dut Wa at mic one and he w into the closit and fodo boll and he sid on we can play with a boll and then wth w to ut sid and pay with the ball. Then we went for a walk and they

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

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wit to a for and.
He wind toa boat a blad
pius it wus fun we
haagat ime to g tri.

It is clear that the writer saw the prompt and was attempting to write a narrative piece. However, the response exhibits a lack of language control that is severe enough to impair communication. The response is difficult to decipher because of a variety of language control problems, including extensive misspellings of basic words, confused word order, and missing words. The writer needs continued language instruction and frequent opportunities to write so that he or she will develop greater fluency.

SCORE POINT 1

STOP

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The cave

One day a boy was sleeping under a tree then a little dog came by and his name was Robin hood he was tapping on my nee and he said what is your name my name is Robin hood look in that cave said Rodin then they went inside to see what it was and it said follow me so they went becarful He said Help! boom! they fell in to a big whole and in the whole was other people in there let's try to e-scape and they had bombs in the cave are youll comin No he will catch you. they were going Hurry! and we got out of the cave just in time are youall right yes.

This response does present a linked, sustained sequence of events; however, the story line is confusing and difficult to follow. Although the beginning of the story is clear and controlled, the writer quickly loses control of the plot. The sudden appearance of unidentified characters (e.g., "It said follow me") and the rapid succession of unexplained events (e.g., "they had bombs in the cave," "we got out of the cave just in time") raise numerous questions in the reader's mind (e.g., Why were there bombs in the cave? How did they get out of the cave?). Also contributing to the confusion is the use of numerous pronouns whose antecedents are not clear. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to use elaboration to fill in these confusing gaps. This writer needs remediation on the use of elaboration to provide all of the information necessary for the reader to understand a piece. The writer would also benefit from assistance with the use of prewriting to organize his or her thoughts before beginning a piece.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

TAAS

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

A Boy A Dog And A Mistery

There was a boy. He went to the forest. With his dog. He got tired. He fail asleep by a tree. His dog ponted to a cave and trid to waik him up. Then the dog barked. Then the boy woik up. He and his dog looked in the cave. But there was no won in there. Then the boy said I gess there is no mistery to solve.

Thats all folks

The sequence of events presented in this response is too sparse for a higher score. Rather than an elaborated, logically linked sequence of events, this is merely the skeleton of a narrative--a series of events which are not meaningfully related and which have not been elaborated through the use of specific details. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to elaborate on the events included in the sequence, adding specific details at each point in the narrative. The writer would benefit from remediation on the use of elaboration to develop a narrative.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

One day A little boy went into the woods. The boy had on a big hat. and dots on the hat And he had long black hair. And tennis shos The boy was sleping under a tree with 3 brantches And a funny little dog came up to him. I don't know where he came from. The dog has a funny hat on with a big fether. The dog is wering a jaket The dog was pointing to a cave. there were two hug eyes in the cave they had black dots in the midle. Its probly a huge feroshus animol. the Boy finally wok up. he ran away as fast as he could. But he cept The dog with the funny hat.

SCORE POINT 1

This response does not include sufficient components of narrative writing to be minimally successful. Rather, the main body of the response is a description of the scene pictured in the prompt. The response does include several events, indicating some attempt to write a narrative (e.g., "One day a little boy went into the woods...And a funny little dog came up to him...the boy finally wok up"). However, the few events included in the piece do not constitute a sustained plot. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to develop more of a story line, using elaboration to enhance the plot rather than merely to describe the scene. The writer appears to be unclear on how to write a narrative and would benefit both from remediation on how narrative writing differs from description and from frequent opportunities to practice both descriptive and narrative writing.

EXT PAGE.

GO ON

SCORE POINT 2

2 = RESPONSES THAT ARE MINIMALLY SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT ADDRESSING THE NARRATIVE TASK. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "2" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that contain a bare, controlled, linked sequence of events.***

- ***Responses that contain a somewhat elaborated sequence of events.***

- ***Responses in which organization is apparent, although gaps or rambling may occur.*** In some responses narrative clusters may be evident; however, gaps occur between the clusters. In other responses rambling may occur but does not cause confusion.

- ***Responses that exhibit a limited control of written language.*** These responses contain awkward or simplistic sentence structures and word choice may be limited. Of course, they may include spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage errors that are likely to occur in first-draft writing.

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The Monster Cave

Once up on a time ther was a boy that was a sleep laying back of a tree there was a dog with a hat on and a fether. he woke the boy up and said look theres a cave. The boy said do you think we should go look in it? it looks kind of spooky. The dog said are you a fraidy cat? the boy said know lets go. So they went in the care. But they didn't know that something was waching them. The boy said I want to get out of here but all the doors were shut and the boy cried and and the dog said we got to get out of this then the monster started to chase them. We have to do something. Quick! hit the secret buton. Whew! that was cloes! Then the other monster strted to grab them. "Oh no!" what are we going to do?

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

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Run! Use your magic monster gun. "Oh right." He got the monster. then the doors opened bak up. Wed better go tell the police about the monsters. so they did Thanks son the man said. Well take care of everything now. the next day they were in the paper. And the boy became a big hero.

This response achieves a score of 2 through the effective use of dialogue to develop the plot. However, the writer does not have complete control of the story. The presence of confusing gaps which detract from the overall progression of the story prevents the response from receiving a higher score. For example, it is not explained why the door to the cave is shut, nor does the reader know what the secret button is or where it came from. To achieve a higher score the writer would need to provide additional information to clear up the confusion caused by these gaps.

SCORE POINT 2

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STOP

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The Old Cave

Onc upon a tim a girl was asleep by a tree. She had a hat on that looked lik a basebal cap with dots on it. She had on a jakit with green and white strips and no arms. and tennies with Xes on them pretty soon this funny looking dog seen her he tried to wak her up but she didnt wake up then he seen this cave so he went up to the cave It looked dark and scary whith big ole eys. So he barked real loud and then She wok up. They went in the cave it wds a reel cave. i bet it was a million years old maybe a big animal usd to livd there or maybe a giant. Maybe indians usd to livd there lik the indian caves i saw last sumer. they were neat. I wish i could

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

go back ther next sumer. They were kindd scaired but they kept on waking. they found neat things like a ~~[illegible]~~ water falls. i seen a rely big water falls once it made a lot of noyze. I couldnt hear anything eqeept the water falls Well pretty soon they desided to go home. it was real dark and they were lost in the cav. the little girl started to cry. Then they got lucky they found the door. the funny dog went back to his ones The girl went home she ate a hamberger for diner and french fris. And ice cream too then she wacht tv for a wile with her bruthr.

This response includes sufficient story line and elaboration to receive a score of 2. It did not receive a higher score because it is filled with extraneous bits of non-narrative writing. These sections do not add to the story line and, in fact, detract from the fluency of the narrative. For example, the detailed description of the girl at the beginning of the narrative and the discussion of caves and of the writer's vacation do not enhance the narrative. Furthermore, the discussion of the girl's activities after leaving the cave are only remotely connected to the rest of the story. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to eliminate the extraneous material and to strengthen the narrative sequence through the inclusion of additional elaborated events which are meaningfully related to the story line. This writer would benefit from instruction and practice in writing a narrative piece and in using revision to tighten up a piece of writing.

STOP

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The Unusual cave

one day a boy and his dog were walking. the boy and his dog had walked a long way. So the boy and his dog stoped to rest the boy sat down a fell asleep. The dog was looking a round and saw a cave. In the cave he saw two eyes. The dog barked and woke the boy up. The dog said to the boy look! the boy looked at the cave. He saw two eyes the boy and his dog walked over to the cave. The boy looked in he saw nothing. The boy heared something it sonuded like this re-e-e-e-e. The boy and his dog ran home The boy said I will never do that again.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

This response represents a tightly controlled, logically linked sequence of events. The response is somewhat similar to the second paper under score point 1 (A Boy A Dog And A Mistery), but is more successful because the events in the sequence are more tightly linked, there are no confusing gaps, the plot moves forward through time, and some of the events in the sequence are somewhat elaborated. For example, after mentioning that "The boy heared something," the writer adds the specific detail, "It sonuded like this re-e-e-e-e." To achieve a higher score the writer would need to add specific details to other events in the sequence. This writer would benefit from assistance in using elaboration to enhance a story line.

SCORE POINT 2

STOP

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The Mistery Cave

One daya little girl was sleeping in the woods beside a cave. This dog came a long with a feather in his hat. His name was Buster. He looked at the little girl and he looked at the cave. with tow eyes And he wanted togo in there. so they went in the cave. it was realy scary. There were things fliyng arownd. Like bats and spiders. They wanted to go home. But they coodcnt. Then they sawa beef dark forest. It was rainjng realy hard and thair was thunder. They hid under a bush for awile until it stopt raining. Then they got to the top of a mountain they could see for a hundred thowsend miyles. they could see rives and lakes. It was meat. Wene they got home they told there mom about everything they seen. She was pretty mad.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

This response contains a narrative sequence with a sustained plot and sufficient elaboration to be minimally successful. The plot consists of several narrative clusters, each of which is somewhat elaborated. The response does not receive a higher score because, although a number of the events within each cluster are somewhat elaborated (e.g., the description of what the characters saw when they first went into the cave), the logical links between these clusters are missing, producing sudden, unexplained shifts in time and location. For example, the writer does not explain how the characters went from hiding under a bush in the forest to standing on top of a mountain. Nor does he or she explain how the characters got home from the mountain. In addition, there is one confusing gap at the end of the story: the writer does not explain why the little girl's mother is mad. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to provide additional information to fill in these gaps and link the narrative clusters. This writer would benefit from instruction and practice in the use of elaboration to eliminate gaps and to explain shifts in location and/or time.

SCORE POINT 2

103

STOP

SCORE POINT 3

3 = RESPONSES THAT REPRESENT GOOD ATTEMPTS AT TELLING A STORY. THE READER HAS NO DIFFICULTY FOLLOWING THE STORY LINE. THE ELABORATION CONTAINED IN THESE RESPONSES IS CONTROLLED, ADDING SUBSTANCE TO THE STORY LINE. THESE RESPONSES ARE CHARACTERIZED BY THE FOLLOWING:

- ***Responses that present a moderately well-elaborated sequence of events.***

- ***Responses that have an organizational strategy that is, for the most part, consistent.*** Occasional gaps, repetitions, or digressions may occur.

- ***Responses that exhibit a clarity of expression, effective word choice, and a general control of the written language.*** Errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage may occur in these first-draft attempts.

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The Cave

Once upon a time, there were a dog and a girl. They went on a hike togather. Soon the girl was getting sleepy. So she fell asleep by a tree. But the dog was not sleepy. So he just waited. He was looking around, when he saw a cave! With mean looking eyes inside! The dog tried to wake the girl up. But she did not wake up. The tried and tried. finally she woke up. The girl saw her dog pointing to the care. But the girl did not see the mean looking eyes, only the dog saw the mean looking eyes. Since the girl did not see the mean looking eyes. She said to the dog let's see what's in it. She stared walking to it. But the dog tried to pull her back. But she said no no don't pul me

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

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back. So they went in the cave. They felt something furry. But they went around it. The girl remember she had a flashlight in her poket. So she turned it on she shined it on the furry thing. It was a furry monster! They ran to the otherend of the cave and at the end they diden't see the ocean. They fell in the ocean. Splash!!! Then in the ocean was a sea monster! They swam for there lives. Soon the got to the shore and went home. By then her mother had dinner ready and a good dinner for her dog. And they lived happily every after.

This response is uneven in its development. The events presented in the first part of the response are moderately elaborated with no sudden transitions. However, as the writer approaches the conclusion (the ocean sequence), he or she loses control of the story, moving from event to event with almost no elaboration. This rapid succession of unelaborated events detracts from the overall quality of the story. In addition, there are some organizational weaknesses, including weak transitions (e.g., the writer does not explain how the characters got home) and unnecessary repetition (the idea of "mean-looking eyes" is repeated several times). To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to develop the story more evenly, filling in gaps and adding elaboration to the events in the latter part of the narrative so that the quality of the organization and elaboration evident in the first half of the response is sustained throughout the narrative.

STOP

SCORE POINT 3

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The King

The unusal dog wakes up the boy and says, "I'm going to see what is in the cave. So the unusal dog walks to the cave and says, "Who is in there?" And the big thing says, "It is I, the king of all caves."
Oh! said the dog.

Then the King growles, but that didn't scare the dog away. So the king said, "If you don't leave I'll turn you into a goonie" But the dog still didn't budge. The king said, "I'll give you one more chance. But, he didn't care. So the king said, "That's it, Googiely boo! Fidely Foo you're a goonie!"

But, the dog was powerful so the spell bounced of the dog and the spell went back to the King and he was turned into a goonie.

This response is moderately elaborated. The story line contains no unexplained gaps and is easy to follow. The writer uses dialogue effectively to develop the plot, and the writer's choice of words creates a number of vivid images (e.g., growles, budge, bounced). To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to develop the story more fully by adding specific and vivid details surrounding the events in the narrative and/or by sustaining the story over a longer period of time through the addition of elaborated events that are meaningfully related to the narrative sequence.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE POINT 3

GO ON

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TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The Mistereyes Sight

Once upon a time there was a boy. He was on a mision to killevry bad animal On Earth. One day wile he was walking he met a dog. That dog was an unusual dog. That dog could run, jump, and walk on it's hind legs, he could talk, point, and he also wor clothes. The boy decited that dog was a helpful friend. They played toge4her for a while. Then the boy decited to take a nap by a cave. Just a few minutes after the boy wasasleep, the dog saw some eyes in the cave. The dog barked and barked and barked finally the boy woke up he saw the eyes he took his knife and rushed in the cave. He looked and looked then he saw a mouse. He looked and looked agin but he coulden't

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

find any thing. Finally he walked out of the cave. Then he saw something big and black coming after him and he got scared. But it was just his very own shadow. After that he laughted and laughted and laughted. The End.

This response achieves a 3 rating through moderate elaboration and a strong story line. There are no confusing gaps or sudden transitions, and the response has a clear sense of beginning and ending. Consistent elaboration is achieved through the addition of specific detail at each phase of the plot. However, the plot is not well enough developed to achieve a score of 4. In addition, in a few cases, unnecessary repetition of the same idea detracts from the overall effectiveness of the story (e.g., "He looked and looked then he saw a mouse. He looked and looked agin..."). To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to fully develop the narrative. This could be achieved either by elaborating further on events already included in the sequence or by sustaining the story over a longer period of time through the inclusion of additional events that are well elaborated and meaningfully related to the overall plot.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The lion in the Cave

Once upon a time this girl was sleeping this rescued dog tried to wake the girl up. But the dog could'nt wake the girl up. The dog wanted to show her a cave. The dog didn't know were was in the cave. The dog saw A eyes from the cave. After a while the girl woke up. She saw the dog taping on her She looked when the dog pointed. And she saw A eyes. she said its must be a lion in that cave. she went to the cave to all was it a lion when she got close the lion came out. When the girl saw the lion the girl backed up real slowly when she

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GO ON

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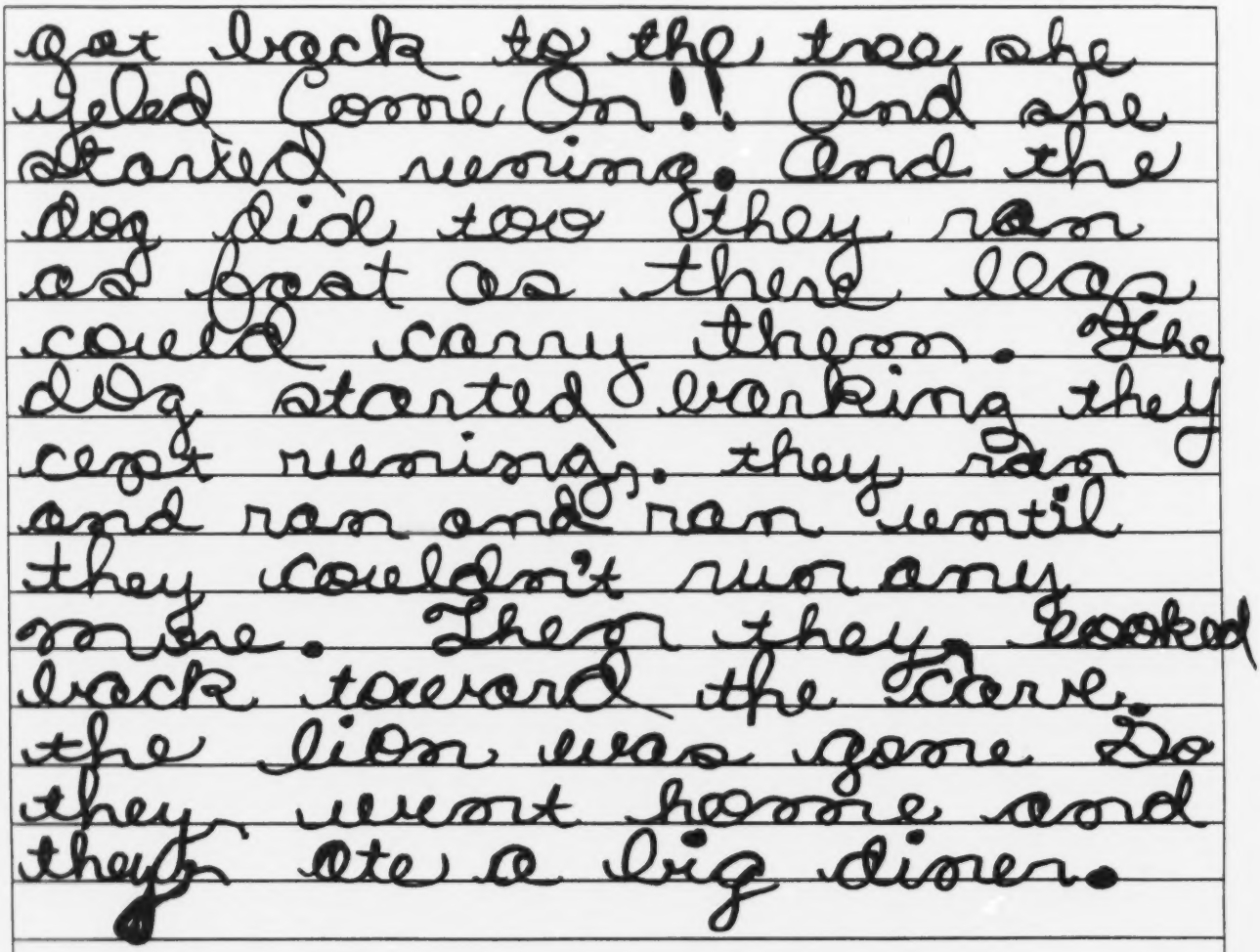

got back to the tree she yeled Come On!! And she started runing. And the dog did too they ran as fast as there legs could carry them. The dog started working they cept runing. they ran and ran and ran until they couldn't run any more. Then they looked back toward the Cave. the lion was gone. So they went home and they ate a big diner.

This response has a moderately elaborated, sustained, logically linked sequence of events, and the narrative is easy to follow. The writer carefully takes the reader through each small step of the sequence of events (e.g., "She saw the dog taping on her She looked wher the dog pointed. And she saw 2 eyes. she said..."). However, to achieve a higher score, the writer needs to flesh these steps out more fully. That is, the writer needs to elaborate on each of the events in the sequence, adding details to help the reader visualize the events more clearly.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

111

SCORE POINT 4

4 = RESPONSES THAT ARE CONSISTENT, ORGANIZED, AND ELABORATED NARRATIVES. THESE RESPONSES ARE UNIFIED AND EASY TO READ. THE FEW INCONSISTENCIES THAT MAY OCCUR ARE OVERWHELMED BY THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE RESPONSE. THESE RESPONSES ARE CHARACTERIZED BY THE FOLLOWING:

- ***A controlled, well-elaborated sequence of events.*** The response follows the narrative progression from beginning to end. The writer does not make abrupt shifts in time or location. When shifts in time or location occur, the writer handles these in a clear, effective manner.

- ***Narratives that have a clear sense of beginning and ending.*** The writer does not stop writing abruptly but brings closure to the writing by resolving the action. Occasionally, a writer begins to tell a story and then runs out of paper before bringing the story to an effective conclusion. If an otherwise well-written story ends abruptly because the writer has run out of space, the paper is still eligible for a "4."

- ***Consistent control of the written language.*** Though the writer may not incorporate all of the appropriate mechanics or conventions of language, the response is particluarly effective.

  These responses may often contain some special feature:

  - Varied syntactic constructions, including compound and complex sentences.

  - Effective word choice, including vivid words, phrases, or expressions.

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The ALIVE Cave

Once there was a dog and a boy. It was a sunny day so the boy decided to take a nap. While he was sleeping the dog saw a cave. He woke the boy up. The boy's name was Rob. The dog's name was Robin. When the boy woke up, he saw the cave, too. They walked to the cave. Rob asked, "Should we go in?" Robin said "Well, okay." They went in, but not very far. Rob said, "It's dark in here." They heard an ecko. "It is dark in here, here, here." It didn't sound like Rob's ecko though. Rob asked, "Robin, are you brave enough to go in farther?" "I guess so." They took two more steps. "Robin, do you see those two glowing things over there?" "Yes, I do." They both took a few more steps. "Rob do you remember that ecko we heard"? "Yes." "Do you remember that the ecko didn't sound like yours"? "Yes." Well, I bet those glowing things were eyes. That ecko must have came out of the mouth that matched the eyes. "Robin, you are very smart." Rob yeled. "Okay. tell us what

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

you are!" The ecko answered, "I'm a cave, cave, cave." "Are you sure. I never heard of talking caves before." "Yes, I'm sure, sure, sure. But nobody beleives that caves can talk, talk, talk." "Well, we'll see about that," Rob said. The dog and the boy went home. Rob told his father about the cave. "It says nobody beleives caves can talk." "Maybe we can change that," said Rob's father. He picked up the telephone. When Rob and Robin went to bed that night, his father was still talking on the phone. The next morning Rob read the newspaper and what do you think he saw. In the paper it said ROB AND ROBIN HAAS FOUND ALIVE CAVE. Rob was so surprised. He told Robin He was surprised. They both felt good. They both were very brave from then on.

This response is clear, organized, and fluent. There are no loose ends and the writer brings the action to an effective resolution. At each point in the story, the writer provides additional details which add to the story line. For example, in the beginning of the story, rather than just stating that the boy went to sleep, the writer gives a reason ("It was a sunny day so the boy decided to take a nap"). The writer provides additional elaboration through the use of dialogue which moves the story forward.

SCORE POINT 4

114

STOP

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The hidth treasure

Once upon a time ther was a little girl named Brenda. Brenda was sound asleep in a dark forest. then she herd a noise and she woke up all of a suddeen. Ther was a Funny dog barking at her and pointing at a cave. The dog was wearing doths. She never saw a dog wering doths. then he said to her "whats in that cave" She screemed. He said "dont worry. Im just a magic dog. Thats why I can talk. "Oh" Brenda said. I dont know whats in that cave. lets go check it out So they ran into the cave. It was very dark. they walked and walked. After 5 hours they came to a big room with gold everywere. "Wow! its a hidden tresure" Brenda cried. Yes, I know said the dog. It used to belong to my Family. An evil gremlin stol it all and turned my family into animals. the only way to brake the spel is to Find the gold and get it away From the gremlin. So they grabed the gold and ran all the way to the police When the gold was safe the most amazing thing happened. The magic dog turned into a little girl named

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

Dolly Brenda and Dolly became best frends From that day on !!!

This response is controlled, organized, and well elaborated. The narrative is easy to follow, and it is clear that the writer used an organizational plan in developing the story line. All of the events in the sequence are logically connected, and there is a clear sense of beginning and ending. The writer develops the plot fully through effective use of dialogue as well as through the inclusion of specific details which allow the reader to visualize the events included in the plot. Although the language in the response is not as vivid as that of some other "4" responses, it nevertheless receives a score of 4 by virtue of its overall effectiveness.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

One day Mars the dog went for a walk in the woods alt by himself. After a wile he saw a litle girl sleeping He said to himself, I need a freind. so he desided to wate for the girl to wake up. As soon as the girl wake up he said "My name is Mars. whats your's?" "My name is Tanika." sudenly Mars saw a big cave. "Lets go in that cave. Tanika and Mars walkd towards the cave. they got closer and closer. then they saw a pair of eys looking at them. Lets go! Tanika yelled. But before they got away a hugge grisly beat jumped out!! he growled then he started to chase them. they ran and ran. Finaly they hid behind some rocks. After a long time Mars looked out from the rocks. "Well the bear is gone. Whew!" he said But we are lost now said Tanika How am I ever going to get back

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

home? "she said. she was sad
Mars said I will help you lets walk
around and see what we can find
so they walk up a big hill At first
they didn't see anything. But then
they saw a big X on the ground.
Mars said Lets see whats under
the X. They digg for an hour. All
of a sudden they saw a box.
they opened it up there was
a map in the box Its a
map to my house!! cried Tanika
so they Folowed the map back
to her house and Tanika thanked
Mars and they played the rest
of the day.

This response is elaborated, organized, and unified. It is clear that the writer had a plan for organizing the narrative, and this plan is carried out effectively. Each event in the sequence contributes to the overall development of the plot, and the writer embellishes each event with specific details.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

CORN DOG

One cool fall morning, a little boy and his amaganary pet dog were walking on a dirt path. The boy's name was Bert, and his amaganary pet dog's name was Chip. As they were walking they got tired and very hot, but soon they found a shady spot under a tree, so they decided to take a nap. They didn't know that over yonder was an enormous cave with huge dark green glowing eyes. Bert and amaganary chip went to sleep for about an hour or so, and suddenly a Grrr.... sound woke them up but when they were awake For awhile they they didn't hear anything at all. Then they looked around, everywhere except around the cave "Well, I guess we're just hearing things," said Bert to amaganary Chip. Suddenly amaganary Chip new what made that Grrr.... sound and was fed up with it and

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

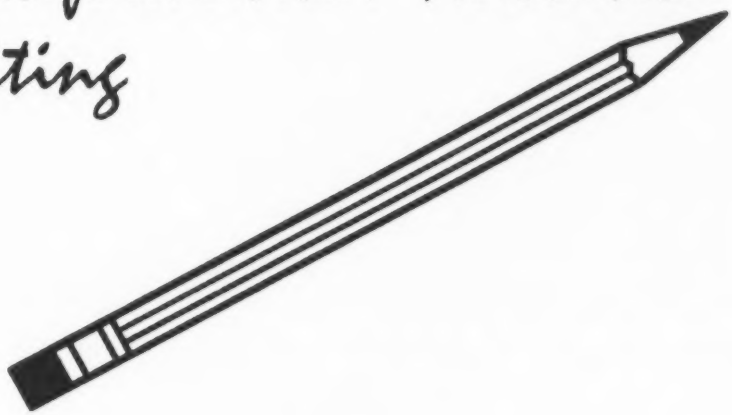
was getting pretty scared even though he was not real. He just had to tell Bert about it, but he couldn't since he wasn't real and he couldn't talk. Then he remembered he had a power belt and if he broke his power belt, he would be real. So with a wham and a wako, he broke his belt! He tapped Bert on knee and told him about the cave. Bert woke up in astonishment that Chip was real. Bert looked where Chip was pointing and saw those eyes and walked closer. He got closer and closer until he saw this enormous "CORNDOG." Then the CORNDOG roared at him and he ran out of the cave. He ran home, and slammed the door and stayed home until he thought he was safe. After that incedent Chip and Bert never went there again.

This response is fluent, controlled, and well elaborated. The response is characterized by varied sentence structure, effective word choice (e.g., amaganary, roared, astonishment), and the presence of particularly vivid images (e.g., "...over yonder was an enormous cave with huge dark green glowing eyes" and "with a wham and a wako, he broke his belt!"). There are a few minor gaps in the story. For example, it is not clear how "amaganary Chip" knew what made the "Grrr...sound" nor why he was fed up with it. However, these minor gaps do not detract from the overall effectiveness of the response.

SCORE POINT 4

120

TAAS Grade 3 Scoring Guide for Informative / Narrative Writing



HOW TO

Explain how you get ready for school in the morning. Tell what you do first. Then tell what other things you do.

122

SCORE POINT 0

0 = RESPONSES THAT ARE NOT SCORABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE BLANK OR FAIL IN OTHER WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE TASK. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "0" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses in which the student writes on an entirely different topic than the one specified.***
- ***Responses in which the student makes an attempt to respond, but this attempt contains so little writing that the reader cannot discern whether the student is responding to the prompt.***
- ***Responses in which the student repeats or paraphrases the prompt but does not attempt to respond to it.***
- ***Responses in which the student writes entirely in a language other than English.***
- ***Responses that are completely unreadable because they are illegible or incoherent.*** Illegible responses are those in which the handwriting cannot be read; letters may be discernible, but they do not form recognizable words. Incoherent responses are those in which letters or words are strung together in a meaningless fashion.
- ***Responses that contain nothing more than an explicit refusal to respond to the specified prompt, although the student may offer some explanation of his or her refusal.***
- ***Blank papers.***

SCORE POINT 1

1 = RESPONSES THAT ARE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT DELINEATING THE STEPS/STAGES OF THE SPECIFIED PROCESS OR ACTIVITY. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "1" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that use the wrong purpose/mode; that is, they do not include the requisite components of informative/narrative writing.*** In these responses the writer does not order sequentially and/or delineate the steps/stages needed to complete a specified process or activity.

- ***Responses that are informative/narrative ("how to") but are unsuccessful in their presentation.*** Responses that attempt to address the specified process or activity but are not successful may take the following forms:

  - Responses that present a brief phrase with some indication of an attempt to attend to the task.

  - Responses that have so little writing that there are not enough steps/stages to understand the process or activity.

  - Responses that present a sequence or set of steps/stages in the process or activity but are too sparse and/or list-like to be minimally successful.

  - Responses that attend very briefly to the task but do not remain on the topic. These responses acknowledge the assignment but then switch to another topic.

- ***Responses that are poorly organized.*** In these responses the writer may present steps/stages in a random or repetitious fashion, thereby causing gaps that require the reader to infer the writer's intended thoughts, or the writer may ramble, presenting numerous details that do not contribute to an understanding of the process or activity.

- ***Responses that exhibit an overall lack of control of written language so that communication is impaired.*** The expression of the writer's thoughts is so confusing that the reader is left wondering what the writer is attempting to say.

  - At the word level there may be repeated errors in the spelling of basic words, in word choice, and/or in usage.

  - At the sentence level confusion occurs when words are not arranged in a logical order, or when there is an apparent order but the meaning is nevertheless unclear. It is inappropriate for the reader to guess at the writer's intent or to make inferences about the writer's meaning.

  - At the composition level responses lack explicit connections between ideas, and attempts at illustrations or explanations of ideas are either irrelevant or repetitious.

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

When I go To school I ride The bus. My sister makes breakfast she doesnt like To and I eat. I get up I eat I watch TV. I ride the bus. I have to find my shoes and my shirt my brother already found his I getup and find my stuff. I get dressed I catch The bus to school. I brush my teeth and watch TV and eat and thats what I do in the morning.

SCORE POINT 1

This response lacks organization. The writer repeats many of the steps throughout the response. For example, eating is mentioned three different times. In addition, the writer does not sequence the steps from beginning to end, nor does he or she elaborate on the steps. Repetition and lack of sequence make the process hard to follow. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to eliminate repetition, sequence the steps, and provide adequate elaboration of the steps. The student may also benefit from remediation in "how-to" writing and in the elaboration of ideas, as well as from practice in using prewriting activities to generate and organize ideas to develop a draft.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

I get far st on my hos ont he mong. Efrbaody who wak on hos sleping no wad nome. I go get somf ud ad tir ne the TV on relo ad wa at carnos ad eat my fude. Then my mostres sad stup waghig TV ad get dest ad I goad get mycos ad she waats TV. I pruse my tethe ad co me by here ad I witto shol.

It is obvious that the writer saw the prompt and attempted to respond to it. However, this response exhibits a lack of control of written language to the extent that communication is impaired and the response is therefore unsuccessful. The text is difficult to decipher because of extensive misspellings of basic words, missing words, and confused word order in sentences. This writer needs remediation in basic sentence construction and language mechanics. The writer would also benefit from frequent writing opportunities, which would allow him or her to develop greater fluency.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

How to get Ready for School

Every day I wake up at 7:00 am. I'm a little tired but I can't let that stop me from going to school. I will tell you what I do in the morning.

First I get dress. Then I brush my teeth. After that I brush my hair. Then I get my shoes and socks on. After that I wash my hands and my face. Then I eat my breakfast Last of all my dad takes me to school.

I had fun writing my how to paragraph about how to get ready for school. Maybe you would like to write a how to paragraph. Have fun writing your own story while I'm writing a million more. Probaby I will be retired by the time you finish your own how to

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

paragraph. Have lots and lots of fun. Try to write another story it will be lots of fun for you.

This response has two specific problems. The first half of the paper presents a sequence of steps in the process of how to get ready for school without any detailed explanation of the steps in the process. The last half of the paper does not contribute to an understanding of the process, and the extraneous material detracts from the overall effectiveness of the paper. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to delete the extraneous material and provide elaboration for the steps in the process. This writer needs remediation in the elaboration of ideas and to be taught how to stay on task.

SCORE POINT 1

STOP

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

I'd like to tell you what I do before I come to school. Frist I get out of bed and pick out the colthes I am going to wear. Than I take off my night colthes and put on my school colthes. After that I go brush my teeth and brush my hair. Next I go in the kithen to eat breakfast. Last I rid to school and have a good day. Did you like hearing about how I get a day started

The End

This response contains a sequence of steps in the process of how to get ready for school, but the steps lack specific detail and are too list-like to be minimally successful. Although the writer does list a number of steps, each is too sparse to give the reader a clear understanding of the process. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to elaborate on these steps by giving additional specific information, such as the location of each activity and details about the school clothes, breakfast, and riding to school. This writer needs remediation in using elaboration to give the reader a clearer picture of the steps in the process.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

In the morning I eat breakfast and get dressed. My mother says I have to go to school erry day so I will learn all about things. I learn how to read and write. I am pretty good in math too. Some times the teacher gets mad at me because I talk to much. Then no one can here her talking. I learn about lots of stuff. The polese man will come to my house if I donnot go to school everg day. Its o.k. but I like Saterdays the best.

Although the writer does mention a few steps in the process of getting ready for school, the majority of this response is not representative of successful informative/narrative ("how-to") writing. Instead of explaining how to get ready for school, the student has focused on a general description of his or her school experience in general. This writer needs remediation in writing "how-to" papers.

SCORE POINT 1

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

130

SCORE POINT 2

2 = RESPONSES THAT ARE MINIMALLY SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT DELINEATING THE STEPS/STAGES OF THE SPECIFIED PROCESS OR ACTIVITY. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "2" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that present a minimally sufficient explanation of the process or activity.*** These responses may take the following forms:
  - Responses that present a lengthy sequence or set of unelaborated steps/stages in the process or activity, some of which are specific.
  - Responses that present a number of steps/stages in the process or activity, most of which are extended.
  - Responses that present a few steps/stages in the process or activity, at least one of which is somewhat elaborated.
  - Responses that present one moderately elaborated step/stage in the process or activity.
- ***Responses in which an organizational strategy is apparent, although gaps, rambling, and/or repetition may occur.*** The responses may contain inconsistencies in organization that disrupt the logical progression but do not cause confusion.
- ***Responses that exhibit a limited control of written language.*** These responses may contain awkward or simple sentence structures, and word choice may be limited. In addition, the responses may include spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage errors that are likely to occur in first-draft writing.

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

How To Get Ready In The Morning

My Mom wakes me up. I put on my clothes on. Next I eat breakfast. Then I brush my theeth. The dentist said I have to get 2 fillings. Teeth are hard to clean. Everyday brushing and brushing them to get the food off. The dentist says dirty teeth makes fillings. Then I get my stuff ready. I put my books and my homework and my lunch in my backpack. Then I wait for the bus. Soon the comes to pick me up. I ride the bus to school. Then I go and ask. can I play Soccer. And that's all.

This response presents a minimally sufficient explanation of the process; however, organizational weaknesses disrupt the flow of the process. For example, although the gap between putting on clothes and eating breakfast does not cause confusion, the quality of the response would be enhanced by providing the reader a bridge between those two activities. The writer also digresses from the process by including past conversation with his or her dentist, and this digression disrupts the logical progression of the process. The writer would benefit from practice in focusing on the specified topic, in sequencing and explaining the steps in a process, and in elaborating. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to delete the extraneous material, elaborate on the existing pertinent information, and add additional detailed information.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE POINT 2

GO ON

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

What I do in the Morning

This is how I get ready for school in the morning. First, I get up from my comfterble bed. Then, I stretch for about 3 minutes. After that, I get dressed in fresh new clothes, as fresh as a flowers. Next, I get a good good breakfast, that is great. Fifth, I brush my teeth real, real good. Finaly, I comb my hair perfictly. Last, I get on my bus, and then I and at school. Now I'm finished telling the steps of how I get ready for school in the morning.

This response presents a lengthy sequence of steps, some of which are specific: "get up from my comfterble bed...stretch for about 3 minutes... get dressed in fresh new clothes." The description of other steps in the process is general. For example, "Next, I get a good, good, breakfast, that is great" does not provide any information about that step in the process. The writer also could have been more specific about the clothes he or she chose or about the order in which he or she put them on. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to include more detail, such as specific information about the clothes or about breakfast.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

SCORE POINT 2

GO ON

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

How to get readry for school

In this hour to pariagh it tells how I get readry for school.

First my mom wakes me up at 6:30 or 7:00. Next, my mom picks out my clothes, and I pick out my shoes. Then, I eat breakfast and get my backpack and my lunch. After that, I brush my teeth and then get my hair combed. Last, I watch TV that's how I know what the weather will be. After the weather I watch cartoons. My favorite one is Tiny Toons. Then it is time to get in the car and leave for school in the morning. Then, I walk into my classroom and then I am at school.

This is how I get readry for school.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

This response presents a few steps in the process, one of which (the TV segment) is somewhat elaborated, while other steps are specific ("wakes me up at 6:30 or 7:00" and "time to get in the car and leave for school"). To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to provide additional detailed information about the dressing process, the breakfast, or the backpack and lunch sequence. For example, although the writer begins his or her explanation about getting dressed somewhat specifically, "my mom picks out my clothes and I pick out my shoes," he or she fails to follow up with a detailed description of the dressing process.

SCORE POINT 2

STOP

TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

Today in class we are writing a How to story. We are writing a How to story and we are tell ing how we get ready for school.

First, I wake up and steatch and yon. Then I go wake up my sitter and take out my dog. After that I went in the kichen and got me so me cerel. Then I went back in to my room and got on some jeans and a red shirt. Then I went in the bath room and put some deodderent and brushed my teeth and water pick my teeth. Then I comb my hair and put burets in my hair.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

Then I went back in to my room and got on some white shoes. Then I got my stuff and got in to the car and go to school.

The length of the introduction adds little to the overall effectiveness of this response. The writer does present a number of steps in the process of getting ready for school, most of which are minimally elaborated, or extended: "wake up and steatch and yon... went in the kichen and got me some cerel...went back in to my room and got on some jeans and a red shirt." However, the steps described in the process lack the sense of completeness that is often indicative of higher score points. For example, the reader knows the writer got some "cerel," but does not have a clear visual image of the breakfast segment of the process. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to elaborate further on the steps in the process.

SCORE POINT 2

SCORE POINT 3

3 = RESPONSES THAT REPRESENT GOOD ATTEMPTS AT DELINEATING THE STEPS/STAGES OF THE SPECIFIED PROCESS OR ACTIVITY. THE READER HAS NO DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE WRITER IS ATTEMPTING TO SAY. THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESPONSES FALL INTO THE "3" CATEGORY:

- ***Responses that present a moderately well-elaborated explanation of the process or activity.*** These responses may take the following forms:
  - Responses that present a lengthy sequence or set of steps/stages in the process or activity, one of which is moderately elaborated or several of which are somewhat elaborated.
  - Responses that present a number of steps/stages in the process or activity, most of which are somewhat elaborated.
  - Responses that present a few steps/stages in the process or activity, some of which are moderately elaborated.

- ***Responses that have an organizational strategy that is, for the most part, consistent, although minor gaps, repetition, or digressions may occur.***

- ***Responses that exhibit a clarity of expression, effective word choice, and a general control of the written language, although errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or usage may occur in these first-draft attempts.***

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

I get up and brush my teeth. Next I find some jeans and a shirt Sometimes I wear my brother's shirt he gots lots. He gotsshoes to like hitops with little red lines on them. I wish I had shoes like my brother but they don't fit. Then, it's time to eat but first. I forgot to say about putting my shoes on. First comes the socks then the left shoe and tie and the right shoe and tie. I get cereal for breakfast. The best Kind is those little wheet ones like on Tv. I see it when I watch cartoons and it makes me hungry. After breakfast I get my books and go to school.

This response presents a lengthy sequence of steps in the process, several of which are somewhat elaborated. However, it also contains digressions that disrupt the logical progression and detract from the overall effectiveness of the response. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to delete the extraneous material and correct the progression of the sequence. In addition, practicing prewriting activities may help the writer to improve the organization of his or her response. This writer may benefit from further practice in "how-to" writing to ensure that he or she is aware of the requisite components of this type of writing.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE POINT 3

GO ON

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The first thing that I do is turn off my alarm clock. Then I get out of my bed and make it neat. Next I go in the bathroom to brush my teeth. Also I wash my face. Then I put on my clothes. First my socks, then my shirt, then my jeans, then my shoes. Next I brush my hair. Then I get my back pack and be sure I have my homework and my books. Then I walk to school. I get in the cafeteria line and the lady gives me my tray. I eat my breakfast fast because I like to go play on the playground. Then I put up my tray. I go outside and play on the bars. When the bell rings I am ready for school.

This response presents a lengthy set of steps in the process, one of which is moderately elaborated. By providing specific details about the type of clothes and the order in which they are put on, the writer gives the reader a much clearer picture of this step than if he or she had stopped at the bare idea, "Then I put on my clothes." This response contains no gaps and the process is easy to follow. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to develop the process more fully by including additional information about the steps.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

SCORE POINT 3

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

1. My mom comese into my room and shakes me 200 times before I get up.
2 Then I get up and squash myself in a chair with a blanket over my head. My mom makes me some chaklet milk. She puts the milk on a little black table. I grab the milk and put it under the blanket and slurp it up.
3. I go into the restroom with my blanket over my head. Then I ~~ther~~ take out my Kermit the frog tooth brush, and take out the crest and brush my teeth. Then I go to the rest room and take a vietamen.
4. Stil carrying my blanket on top of my head, my mom shows me my close. I get dress with my shurt backwards.
5 I get all my stouff to gether and put it in the car then I feed my tow cats Robinhood and Lowchen.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

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6 I get in the car and buckle up.
My mom takes me to school.
And hopfly I have a good time.

The End

This response presents a number of steps in the process, most of which are somewhat elaborated. The process can be followed without confusion, and the response does contain a number of details about each step. Effective word choice such as "squash" and "slurp" and vivid details such as "shakes me 200 times" and "with my blanket over my head" are examples of the way in which the writer effectively develops the response. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to elaborate more fully through additional steps and/or greater detail.

SCORE POINT 3

STOP

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

Today I am going to tell you how I get up in the morning. Frist I get out of bed. Then I make up my bed. Then I get dressed. Then I get my sister out of bed.

Then I eat my breakfast. I get eggs and pancaks, grits. First I put butter on evry pancak so it will melt. Then I put butter in my grits and mash it up. Then I pour surrup on my pancaks and I start to eat. First the eggs and grits, Last the sweet, sweet pancaks. Then I brush my hair and wath TV when I'm not allowd to, But my mom dosn't see me so I dont get grounded. Then I Brush my theeth. Then I get my homework.

Now I play with my brother and sisters; Megan Harmony Fawn and the boy Hunter before the bus comes. Then a nice lady come's by when the bus comes. Then when I get on the bus Me and my sister say good morning. Then we get to school. I

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

go to the jum and play chach. My sister talks with her friends. Then It's time for school to start.

This response presents a lengthy sequence of steps in the process, one of which is moderately elaborated (breakfast step). In addition, other steps are somewhat elaborated (watching TV, getting on the bus). However, the quality of the elaboration is uneven in the response. For example, while the breakfast step is well-developed, the dressing step is not developed at all. To achieve a higher score, the writer would need to develop the steps of the process more evenly by including additional information.

SCORE POINT 3

SCORE POINT 4

4 = RESPONSES THAT ARE CONSISTENT, SPECIFIC, AND ELABORATED PRESENTATIONS OF THE STEPS/STAGES OF A SPECIFIED PROCESS OR ACTIVITY. THESE RESPONSES ARE ORGANIZED, UNIFIED, AND EASY TO READ. THE FEW INCONSISTENCIES THAT MAY OCCUR ARE OVERWHELMED BY THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE RESPONSE. THESE RESPONSES ARE CHARACTERIZED BY MOST OF THE FOLLOWING:

- ***A specific, well-elaborated sequence or set of steps/stages in a process or activity.*** The process or activity as a whole is presented in such a way that it can be understood clearly by the reader.

- ***A thorough presentation of a sequence or set of steps/stages in a process or activity.***

- ***A consistent organizational strategy.*** Although minor lapses may occur, the response has a clear sense of order and completeness. If an otherwise well-written response ends abruptly because the writer has run out of space, the paper is still eligible for a "4."

- ***Consistent control of the written language.*** Though the writer may not incorporate all of the appropriate mechanics or conventions of language, the response is particularly effective.

  These responses may often contain some special feature:

  - Varied syntactic constructions, including compound and complex sentences.

  - Effective word choice, including vivid words, phrases, or expressions.

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TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

In the mornings I get out of bed first. Then I stretch all over. I do my arms and my back and my legs. It helps me wake up. Then I fix the covers. Next I go brush my teeth. I wash my face and fix my hair. Then I put on my jeans and shirt. Getting dressed is fast because I put out my clothes last night. Only buttoning my shirt takes long. Last comes my shoes and socks. I have red laces in my shoes. Now I am ready for breakfast. I get out my favrite cereal. Cheerios! I pour it in a bowl and then I put some milk. Next I get a spoon and eat. Sometimes I drink juice. Next I rinse my dishes. Then I fix my lunch. I put down one bread and one baloney and 1 lettuce and 1 more bread. I wrap it in paper and put it in my backpack. Pass my homework and books. Then I go

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

To school on my bike.

This response presents a complete sequence of steps in the process. The writer's attention to specific details assists the reader in forming a clear mental picture of how the writer gets ready for school in the morning. In addition, the writer clearly demonstrates consistent control of the written language. Although the response does not contain the quality of elaboration and effective word choice of many 4s, it achieves a 4 because of its clarity and specificity.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

First every morning I kick off my blanket and slowly get out of bed. I go switch off the light in my room. Then I grab the railing and quickly walk the stairs. When I'm downstairs I go into the living room and flop down on the couch. Then I turn on the television and change the channel to the country music station. Next I watch T.V. while I take off my nightgown and put on clean clothes that my parents pick out. I tell my parents what I want for breakfast. They fix it while I get dressed. After I'm finished dressing I go eat the breakfast my parents fixed. It's usaully cereal. Every once in a while I almost fall asleep during breakfast! I usaully watch more television while I eat breakfast. After I finish my breakfast I get up from the table and walk into the kitchen. Then I open the refrigerater and get my lunchbox. Then I get my little sister Lindsey's lunchbox and bring it to her. →

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Sometimes Lindsey and I go and get my cat some catfood from the cabinet. Then we pour it into her food bowl, but sometimes my mother and father feed the cat. Then if I had any homework the night before I make sure I already put it in my backpack. Next I turn off the T.V. grab my stuff and hurry to the door. I open the door and my family walks out. Then I go outside shutting the door behind me. After that I walk to the car and open the cardoor. Then I hop in. Lindsey gets in the other car. Last either my mom or dad drives me to school and I rush in, and that's how I get ready for school!

This response is a thorough presentation of a sequence of steps in the process. The reader gets a clear image of the writer's activities because of the clarity of expression and the specific detail provided for each step of the process. For example, "After I finish my breakfast I get up from the table and walk into the kitchen. Then I open the refrigerater and get my lunch box..." gives the reader not only a sense of sequence and of location, but also a detailed description of the actions taking place. The vivid word choice (e.g., flop, grab) contributes to the overall effectiveness of the paper, and the response projects a clear sense of completeness.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

TAAS **Texas Assessment of Academic Skills**
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

The way I get ready for school is. The night befor the school day I get out all my clothes that I'm going to were, shirt and shorts and underwere and socks. I put them on my dresser. Then I go to take a bath. Sometimes its a buble bath. Then I kiss my mather good night. Often that I say my prayers and go to bed. The next morning at 6:30 my mother comes in my room to wake me up But I'm usually awake allready. The man next door wakes me up when he goes to work. He has a truck. I all ways here him slam the door. Next he starts the motor. Then he drives away. When I get out of bed I put on my clothes. Then I wash my face and brush my teeth. Next my Mother ties my hair in pony tails with ribons. Then I put on my shoes. I get my backpack. Then I watch televizon until 7:00. Some times I eat at my house or at my Kusins if I don't like what my mother makes. I mostly like sinamon toast or pop tarts. Some times I get rice krispies or cheerios. My Kusins all ways get bacon and biscuits. Finally I walk to my Kusins house or they walk to mine. We

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

live next store to them. Then we walk to school when they get ready to go.

This response presents a well-elaborated sequence of steps in the process and demonstrates a consistent organizational strategy. Although the writer begins with events from the night before, they are clearly related to the preparation-for-school process. Because of the specific detailed elaboration of steps in the process, the reader is able to visualize many of the actions and to clearly understand the whole process.

SCORE POINT 4

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TAAS Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
Part 1 - Written Composition

Grade 3

When I get ready for school the first thing I do is go to the kithen And See whos up. My MOM And dAd Are USAlly Sitting At our Kitchen table. They Are reading the paper. Some times they drink coffe AND eAt toAst. I SAy good morning to them then good morning to my dog Roxie. I give her A big hUg. Roxie jumps on me She is verry hUngry. But my dAd makeS me put her outside to go to the bAthroom. Roxie wAnts to come in After 5 mintes, she bArkS And scrAtis the door if I dont let her. She bUgs me for food wile I eAt my frosted flAkes. After my cerAl I feed Roxie dogfood And wAter. My mom sAys 15 minites till we leAve for School. "Go get dressed." I go to my room. I mAke my bed rexl fAst then my bed is nice And next. After that I get dressed. If its wArm out I like to weAr shorts. And my white And purple shirt. Then I put my gym shoeS And SokS on. After I Am All dressed I go to the bAthroom. I brush my teeth And I brush my hAir. My mom comeS in the bAthroom. She helps me. She putS my hAir in A ponytAle then she ties A Ribbon in it. It looks fAntAStik! My mom

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

GO ON

gives me A kiss. She sAys time to go. I get my bAkpAk. I put my reading book in it. My dAd gives me my lunch in A bAg. He sAys "to do good in school." Then my mom drives me to school. I AllwAys get to school on time.

This response presents a specific, well-elaborated sequence of steps in the process. The addition of specific details, such as "My mom and dad are usally sitting at our kitchen table. They are reading the paper," helps give the reader a clear picture of the writer's actions--in this case seeing "who's up." The response also has a clear sense of order and completeness and includes a variety of sentence structures.

SCORE POINT 4

STOP

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Appendix

TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC SKILLS
OBJECTIVES AND INSTRUCTIONAL TARGETS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
Grade 3

DOMAIN: Written Communication

Objective 1: The student will respond appropriately in a written composition to the purpose/audience specified in a given topic.

- Use a variety of prewriting activities as sources for later writing
- Stay on topic
- Write stories and brief descriptions
- Recognize that rewriting and editing are done with a particular purpose in mind

Objective 2: The student will organize ideas in a written composition on a given topic.

- Narrate events in chronological order

Objective 3: The student will demonstrate control of the English language in a written composition on a given topic.

- Recognize that the function of first-draft writing is to capture ideas

Objective 4: The student will generate a written composition that develops/supports/elaborates the central idea stated in a given topic.

- Use information and ideas from personal experiences as a source for writing
- Add information omitted in a first draft to subsequent drafts

Objective 5: The student will recognize appropriate sentence construction within the context of a written passage.

- Recognize complete sentences and avoid fragments

Objective 6: The student will recognize appropriate English usage within the context of a written passage.

- Recognize correct person and number of regular verbs and irregular verbs with simple subjects, including personal pronouns
- Recognize correct verb tense and correct form of tense of regular verbs
- Recognize correct verb tense and correct form of tense of irregular verbs

Objective 7: The student will recognize appropriate spelling, capitalization, and punctuation within the context of a written passage.

- Use the fundamentals of spelling
- Use appropriate capitalization
- Use the fundamentals of punctuation

EXPLANATION OF PURPOSE/MODE

AT GRADE 3

Writing is a process for communication. However, not all forms of written communication are the same nor should all written communication occur in the same way. Individuals write to accomplish a purpose. At the Grade 3 level, two purposes have been identified as appropriate for measurement in this assessment:

- **Informative – The writer selects facts so that information can be conveyed.**
- **Expressive – The writer expresses thoughts or feelings about an event or object.**

Generally, these purposes do not occur in isolation. For example, an informative task may rely on expressive discourse in the presentation of information. However, one purpose is generally primary, while others are subordinate to the main purpose. In this assessment, written composition items are designed to focus, as much as possible, on a single purpose which is stated or implied in the prompt.

To communicate ideas in a clear and effective manner, one must employ a method or mode of organization appropriate for its intended purpose. At the Grade 3 level, two modes of organization have been identified as appropriate for measurement in this assessment:

- **Narrative – The writer sequences events in a particular order.**
- **Descriptive – The writer uses language to portray features and/or qualities of an idea or object.**

While each of these modes can be defined easily, they do not generally occur in isolation in written discourse. For example, a narrative may include description or a description may be set in a narrative frame. For purposes of this assessment, an attempt is made to cue students to a dominant mode so that they will use that method of organization in their responses.

For this assessment, the writing task calls for a particular combination of purpose and mode. The application of a scoring guide which is specific to a particular purpose/mode ensures consistency and reliability in scoring voluminous student responses. One should recognize, however, that in everyday writing, purposes and modes sometimes overlap.

ELIGIBLE TYPES OF WRITING AT GRADE 3

A: Write a composition to describe an object, person, place, situation, or picture.

Description of Writing Prompt

1. The prompt will elicit a composition that has an informative purpose and is written in the descriptive mode.
2. The prompt will ask the student to describe an object, person, place, situation, or picture. Verbal cues that focus the student's attention on the task will be given in the prompt.
3. If a pictorial stimulus is given, it will consist of either a scene or a single object familiar to all beginning third grade students. The picture will be either fanciful or realistic and will be relatively simple. Visual cues that focus the student's attention on the task will be given in the picture.
4. If the item to be described is not pictured, it will be familiar to all beginning third grade students so that they can write about it.
5. The prompt will contain vocabulary appropriate for beginning third grade students.
6. The prompt will appeal to the interests and experiences of beginning third grade students.

Description of Successful Responses

The composition will have an informative purpose and will be written in a descriptive mode. The level of expectation for student performance will be appropriate for beginning third grade students.

1. The description will be specific and elaborated. The writer should describe a lengthy set of features, which may be elaborated through the use of figurative language and/or rich detail.
2. The description will paint a vivid picture of the object or scene in the mind of the reader by using picturesque words and/or sophisticated sentence structure.
3. The response will be consistent in its organizational strategy. Usually the writer will select one feature and describe it fully before moving on to another feature. If appropriate, the writer will include the locations of features described and delineate the relationship of one feature to another.
4. The response will remain on topic from beginning to end and will not digress into an expressive/narrative piece. The writer may frame the description with narration or interject expressive elements, but these enhance the description rather than detract from it.

B: Write a composition to tell how to do something.

Description of Writing Prompt

1. The prompt will elicit a composition that has an informative purpose and is written in the narrative mode.
2. The prompt will ask the student to tell how to do something. Verbal cues that focus the student's attention on the task will be given in the prompt.
3. The prompt will include a pictorial stimulus, or it will specify a process that is to be explained.
4. If a pictorial stimulus is given, it will consist of a scene, a single object, or a series of pictures familiar to all beginning third grade students. The stimulus will be relatively simple in nature; no extraneous details will be included. Visual cues that focus the student's attention on the task will be given in the picture.
5. If a process is to be explained, the process will be familiar to all beginning third grade students so that they will be able to write about it.
6. The prompt will contain vocabulary appropriate for beginning third grade students.
7. The prompt will appeal to the interests and experiences of beginning third grade students.

Description of Successful Responses

The composition will have an informative purpose and will be written in the narrative mode. The level of expectation for student performance will be appropriate for beginning third grade students.

1. The composition will delineate the steps needed to complete the specified task and will order these steps sequentially.
2. Each step presented will be unambiguous, specific, and elaborated so that the step could be replicated by another individual.
3. The response will be consistent in its organizational strategy. A logical sequence of steps will be presented. The writer will describe each step fully before moving on to another step.

C: Write a narrative on a specified topic.

Description of Writing Prompt

1. The prompt will elicit a composition that has an expressive purpose and is written in the narrative mode.
2. The prompt will ask the student to write a story.
3. The prompt will include a picture, or it will specify a story scenario.
4. If a pictorial stimulus is given, it will consist of a scene or a single object, and it will be fanciful or realistic. The stimulus will be relatively simple in nature; no extraneous details will be included. Visual cues that focus the student's attention on the task will be given in the picture.
5. If a story scenario is presented, it will be familiar to all beginning third grade students so that they will be able to write about it.
6. The prompt will contain vocabulary appropriate for beginning third grade students.
7. The prompt will appeal to the interests and experiences of beginning third grade students.

Description of Successful Responses

The composition will have an expressive purpose and will be written in the narrative mode. The level of expectation for student performance will be appropriate for beginning third grade students.

1. The story will follow the narrative progression from beginning to end. The writer will not make abrupt, confusing shifts in time or location. When shifts in time or location occur, the writer will handle these in a clear, effective manner.
2. The narrative will have a clear sense of beginning and ending. The writer will not end the composition abruptly but will bring closure to it by resolving the action.
3. The response will include rich details and a varied choice of words. Description will be vivid and extensive and will help the reader to visualize the events of the story. The details will embellish the unfolding events.

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

(1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;

(2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a non-segregated basis;

(3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;

(4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;

(5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;

(6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and

(7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; TITLE IX, 1973 EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; AND VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED IN 1974.

It is the policy of the Texas Education Agency to comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, or veteran status (except where age, sex, or handicap constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency makes positive efforts to employ and advance in employment all protected groups.

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY
1701 NORTH CONGRESS AVENUE
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-1494

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